

THE MIND ON-STAGE: CRAFTING THE SELF IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy.

by

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December 2017

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Cornell University 2017

The Mind On-Stage argues that Old English devotional narratives use performative cues to help medieval readers craft a dynamic interior self. While scholars have acknowledged the dramatic nature of Anglo-Saxon literature, comparatively few have studied how medieval readers brought the concept of public performance into the private sphere as they read. Even though patristic and early medieval authors were wary of drama's ability to move and affect audiences, I argue in the following chapters that these same writers co-opted drama and theatrical spectacle in their own writing, hoping to use the affective power of performance to further instill Christian doctrine within the greater community. My project therefore accounts for the proliferation of performative cues in early medieval texts by examining how authors urged their readers to develop a deep sense of interiority through the use of dialogue, graphic imagery, dramatic *figura*, and the division of the psyche into distinct characters. This project thus ultimately traces how performative cues within devotional literature turn the medieval reader's encounter with the silent page into a vibrant inner performance.

Chapter One begins with King Alfred's use of dialogue in his translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies*. By dramatizing this internal dialogue through pointed questions and extended metaphors, I argue that the author uses the soliloquy form to script the creation of a dramatic 'self'. While the *Soliloquies* rely on dialogue to affect readers, the Old English *Psychomachia* in Chapter Two depends on the interaction

between narrative and manuscript illumination to facilitate active reading and self-care. The poem's battles are not simple grotesquerie, but rather eye-catching foci that produce affective responses in medieval readers. Chapter Three turns to the devotional power of the homily by examining dramatic dialogue in *Vercelli IV*. Like Alfred's *Soliloquies*, the soul and the body function as protagonist and antagonist, turning the narrative into proto-morality play designed to scare participants into repentance. *The Mind On-Stage* concludes in Chapter Four with a reading of the *Dream of the Rood*—the Cross's vision, filled as it is with precise detail and description, invites readers to visualize and re-enact the Crucifixion scene within their minds. The act of re-reading the poem and visualizing the vision in turn requires readers to become part of a discursive devotional loop that demands continual prayer, meditation, and rumination.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kaylin O'Dell was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She graduated with a B.A. from Vassar College in 2011, where she majored in English Literature and French and Francophone Studies. After graduation, she joined the English Department at Cornell University, where she received her M.A. in 2014 and her PhD in 2017, with a concentration in Old and Middle English Literature. Her work on drama, performance, and rhetoric within her doctoral dissertation has led to an increased interest in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Along with medieval and early modern literature, her research interests include performance studies, theories of the monstrous, digital humanities, and affect theory.

For Dakota, mín leof.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation was made possible through the support of my wonderful mentors, colleagues, friends, and family. I am so grateful for my dissertation committee, who have encouraged and guided me throughout this entire process. I could not have started, much less finished, this project if it weren't for Samantha Zacher's scholarship, advice, and unwavering support. Her courses, *Love and Ecstasy: Forms of Devotion in Medieval English Literature* and *Care of the Self in Anglo-Saxon England*, provided the intellectual fodder for my project in linking together interiority and performance in early England. Samantha's work on reading and self-care in Old English texts, specifically in tracing the care of the self from Late Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages, has also been formative for my study of dramatic interiority. I am likewise thankful for Andrew Galloway, who was always willing to brainstorm ideas and who encouraged me to expand my interests outside of Old English literature; for Jenny Mann, who guided me throughout the trials of graduate school and teaching, and who helped me bring a bit of the Renaissance back to the Anglo-Saxons; and for Tom Hill, who was always willing to share ideas, and who always knew just the right book that would solve my problems.

I could not imagine writing this dissertation without my wonderful cohort, who helped me remain grounded and pushed me to think outside the box. To Ruth Mullett, Nancy Quintanilla, Hannah Byland, and Ruoji Tang, thank you for the years of love and laughter—and most of all, for forcing me to put down the laptop and go outside once in awhile. You four have made Cornell home for the last six years, and I am so thankful to know you. To Danielle Fuentes Morgan, Alex Harmon, Jonathan Reinhardt, Mike Wiczer, Brittany Rubin, David Aichenbaum, Molly Katz, and Seth Koproski, thank you for the years of coffee dates and conversation, and for making Ithaca so very merry. This acknowledgement section would not be complete without a huge thank you to Emily Rials, whose support and friendship helped

me to write and finish this project. Our weekly pie dates made writing the dissertation feasible—thank you for offering to read wide swathes of messy prose when all felt lost.

To Pam, Tom, and Allison Myers, what can I say? You have been the foundation on which all of this was built, and your unending work ethic and strength have provided me with the best possible model. Thank you so much for encouraging me to study obscure literature; this project would not have happened without you. To Veronica, Mike, Gabby, and Shane, and to all of the Carrozzas, I am so grateful for your love and support, and for giving me a new place to call home. And last, but certainly not least, my deepest thanks to Dakota for the long nights spent working through the snarls of this argument, and for having patience down to a fine art.

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Introduction

As a corpus, Old English devotional literature is full of dramatic and performative possibility. Scholars have continually acknowledged the dramatic nature of these texts, and yet the parameters of what it means to be drama or even ‘dramatic’ in this period remain ambiguous. As Carol Symes aptly observes, “our quest for dramatic evidence has largely remained just that: a quest for what dramatically announces itself as ancillary to drama, or a quest for ‘what we would call plays’ that are conceived explicitly as scripts for performance....”¹ While on the hunt for self-designated plays and records of oral performance, scholars have often ignored narratives that foreground dramatic spectacle to move or affect their readers. In this dissertation, I begin to fill this lacuna by thinking about medieval performance from a different angle—specifically, by studying how medieval readers brought the concept of public performance into the private sphere as they read. Even though patristic and early medieval authors were wary of drama’s ability to move audiences, I argue in the following chapters that these same writers nevertheless co-opted theatrical spectacle in their own work, hoping to use the affective power of performance to inspire and engage their readers. In using theater as a guiding framework, these authors encouraged readers, from monks to clerics to laymen, to develop a deep sense of interiority by dividing the self into a series of characters who play out devotional narratives on the inner-mind’s stage. I therefore expand the concept of performativity in Anglo-Saxon England to

¹ Carol Symes, “The Medieval Archive and the History of Theatre: Assessing the Written and Unwritten Evidence for Premodern Performance,” *Theatre Survey* Vol. 52, No. 1 (2011): 29-58, at 32.

include interiority and self-making, thereby providing a methodology for analyzing the dramatic nature of Old English literature that does not prioritize the logistics of oral delivery.²

To create these connections, my project brings together a network of sub-fields in medieval scholarship, with performance as a hub and topics like drama, devotion, interiority, and reading as spokes that move outward. While these topics may never perfectly align, using performance to frame how medieval readers engage with devotional poetry and prose can provide deeper insight into medieval cultures of reading and meditative practice. Not least is that using this framework could illuminate the delicate balance for medieval readers between delving deep into the self while remaining an active part of their devotional communities. Following the lead of scholars like Jessica Brantley and Sarah McNamer who focus on late medieval reading, I map out how texts use dramatic rhetoric and imagery to produce affective responses from their audiences. To do so, this project unites a wide range of Old English texts and translations, providing both poetic and prose examples of this performative mode of reading, including Alfred's *Soliloquies*, Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, *Vercelli IV*, and the *Dream of the Rood*. The call to dramatize the inner mind is signaled in these texts by performative cues, including interpellation, first person narration in the present tense, and vivid ekphrastic imagery that grabs the reader's attention and arouses specific affective responses like fear, passion, and righteous anger.³

² When I use the term 'script' here, I am using it literally as Sarah McNamer does in her work on performance and affect in the late Middle Ages—in other words, a text that prescribes replicable actions for the reader to perform within the self, such as visualizing and recreating a devotional scene within the mind, or repeatedly re-enacting a recorded dialogue as a form of prayer and contemplation. Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 13-15. See pp. 14-15 in this Introduction for an in-depth explanation of her work and the usefulness of "scripting" as a framework for dramatic OE literature.

³ Sarah McNamer outlines these performative cues in her analysis of *Pe Wohunge of Oure Laured*. She argues that these elements incite readers to feel compassion for Christ on the Cross,

Although this dissertation primarily investigates Anglo-Saxon poetry and prose, I would like to preface my early medieval texts with an early modern example. In her *Sociable Letters*, which is a collected and bound cache of private letters on topics ranging from war to marriage, Margaret Cavendish meditates on the parameters of theater by examining the blurred lines between written text and oral drama and between private thought and communal experience. She describes the moment she saw a mountebank and two women perform on stage during a visit to the Continent, and how this moment subsequently transformed her understanding of theater:

“I took such Delight, to see them Act upon the Stage, as I caused a Room to be hired in the next House to the Stage, and went every day to See them, not to Hear what they said, for I did not Understand their language, & their Actions did much delight my sight...But they being gone, I was troubled for the Loss and Pastime which I took in Seeing them Act; wherefore to please me, my Fancy set up a Stage in my Brain...and the Incorporeal Thoughts were the several Actors, and my Wit play’d the Jack Fool, which Pleased me so much as to make me Laugh Loud at the Actions in my Mind.”⁴

When Cavendish is no longer able to physically see her favorite stage play, she explains how the performance called her to translate what she witnessed into the inner chamber of her own mind. By setting up a stage within her brain, complete with actors and scenery, she is both able to re-experience the pleasure of witnessing the show, and replay each scene after leaving the space of the theater. After she enjoys the diversion of her imagined actors, her reason and philosophical thoughts step in to banish the mind-stage, just as the magistrates banished the real mountebank and actors from performing for fear of the plague. Cavendish explicitly states that her mental faculties associated with reason and logic consider “Fancy” to be “Idle Company” who “Robbed the multitude of Thoughts, of Time and Treasure.”⁵ The imagination (composed as it is of the

and to productively imagine themselves as witness and participant. See further: Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, 11-12.

⁴ Margaret Cavendish, “Letter 195,” in *Margaret Cavendish: Sociable Letters*, ed. James Fitzmaurice (New York: Routledge, 2012), 206-207.

⁵ Margaret Cavendish, “Letter 195,” 207.

mind's actors who are "Strangers" that "Cheat" and "Fool") is to be kept in check, so as not to influence the sobriety of the mind.⁶ In her work on early modern closet drama, Karen Raber goes on to note, however, that Cavendish's desire to banish the stage and actors from her mind is belied by the ease with which she translates the physical stage into the mental stage in the first place.⁷ Although her "Philosophical and Physical Opinions" judge the "Incorporeal Thoughts" to be unworthy of a reasonable mind, these figures are personified within the passage—they imitate what Cavendish witnesses in the theater by banishing the Thought-Actors as the magistrates banished the real ones. In this way, even though her faculties of reason seem to introduce a sober kind of order, they are in reality performing on the same stage that they seek to dismantle.

For Cavendish, theater is a locus of possibility that is undistinguishable from the acts of everyday life—from reading to writing to living.⁸ When she converts the physical stage into a mind-stage, the process is more than just rote translation. Although she reconstructs the framework of the original spectacle in her mind, she uses the inner-stage to create new stories and entertainment for herself as well. The creative possibilities for Cavendish's mind-stage are endless. Her thoughts concoct "Some Incorporeal Drugs for Incorporeal Diseases, to be Bought by Incorporeal People," allowing her to use the mountebank's script while adding details and substituting her own wit for the role of "Jack Fool." As an institution, theater gave the public an avenue for openly examining and reflecting on current social issues, including the state of the monarchy or the tribulations of the rising middle class. And yet during the Restoration, in which Cavendish wrote, the theater became a dangerous space that was heavily censored because authorities feared the spread of plague and because they believed the theater to be a breeding

⁶ Karen Raber, *Dramatic Difference: Gender, Class, and Genre in the Early Modern Closet Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001), 31.

⁷ Karen Raber, *Dramatic Difference*, 31.

⁸ Karen Raber, *Dramatic Difference*, 31-32.

ground for immorality, heresy, and political dissent. Transferring theatrical spectacle from the stage to the private space of the mind therefore gave individuals a safe way to meditate on political and social discourse without risking external harm, and without projecting their personal views into the public eye. The fact that performing scenes within the mind was a type of safe-haven for Cavendish is nevertheless complicated by the fact that she both writes down and publishes these inner reflections for the world to read, thereby disrupting the internal process by pushing it outwards.

Although Cavendish's vision of the mind-stage may seem an odd place to begin a dissertation on the early Middle Ages, the way she transforms public spectacle into private performance is productive for grappling with early medieval devotion. Part of the challenge of dissecting Cavendish's drama metaphor is that her experience of performance is inherently different than ours as modern readers, in much the same way that medieval reading practice is oftentimes foreign and opaque to us. We therefore can't assume that Cavendish's, or even medieval readers', conception of engaging in internalized performance is aligned with our own habits. And yet, the inherent difficulty of navigating performance and reading is one that resonates across periods; Cavendish's metaphor is a useful starting point precisely because it underscores the complexity of breaking down reading practice and the role that dramatic rhetoric played in private reflection. On the one hand, her publication of these private letters, as well as her conception of the "mind-stage," reminds us to acknowledge the historically fraught relationship between theater and morality; it also illustrates the ways in which internal reflection is a creative, dramatic process and provides a framework for discussing how communal experience can facilitate individual revelation. On the other hand, the complexity (or even messiness) of her metaphor exemplifies how difficult it is to truly unravel medieval and early

modern interiority—specifically, how medieval and early modern readers might have integrated dramatic conventions as they digested texts in private, away from the community. The task we are left with is therefore to examine how texts themselves signal the type of performative thinking and reading that Cavendish discusses in her metaphor; namely, how texts call readers to imagine specific scenes, just as the mountebank’s performance called her to internally recreate and eventually write down the play she once enjoyed.

In the same way that stage performance generates pleasure while allowing participants to push social and political boundaries, this type of internal performance discussed above allows readers to safely negotiate a range of political, religious, and moral dilemmas.⁹ This practice far predates the early modern period. In Chapter One of the dissertation on Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, for example, I begin by analyzing Augustine’s call to retreat into the inner space of the mind to reflect on Christian doctrine without fear of doubt or shame. I then demonstrate how Augustine’s call for inner-dialogue is translated into the Old English *Soliloquies*, where the author re-envisions the Latin source by opening the dialogue up to a wider reading audience. As we will see in each of the following chapters, there is a symbiotic balance between private and communal devotion—readers are urged to move into the self and away from the public sphere, even as they are ultimately urged to reconnect with their community.

Turning briefly back to Cavendish’s “mind-stage” metaphor, she is acutely aware of Fancy’s power to remake the space of the theater within the confines of her mind. She also seems to prefer this “Fancy-Stage” to the real deal, for as she states earlier with the *Sociable Letters*,

⁹ We see this functionality in Cavendish when she uses the idea of the theater to meditate on the morality of drama, the presence of women onstage, and the blurry line between imagination and reason. As Raber has suggested, within the early modern period the concept of performance and drama “shifts to include a wider variety of practices...From public debates about morality, to the “staging” of religious confrontations in the churches, streets, and houses of the government.” Karen Raber, *Dramatic Difference*, 33.

“though I do not go Personally to Masks, Balls, and Playes, yet my Thoughts entertain my Mind with such Pleasures, for some of my Thoughts make Playes, and others Act those Playes on the Stage of Imagination, where my Mind sits as Spectator.”¹⁰ The internal stage is equal in its ability to produce entertainment, and the pleasure that each creates seems equivalent in nature as well. It is striking that in this letter, Cavendish publishes (and thereby unearths) her inner-most reflections for the greater public, while also pulling readers into her own mind where her thoughts are separately personified and where they perform as Actors on the “Stage of Imagination.” The mind in her scenario is tricky to parse—it exists as both stage and spectator, for the stage is situated within the mind and her thoughts enter the mind when they become actors, but the mind itself also exists as a spectator for the play itself.

When examining medieval and early modern texts alike, it is important to acknowledge that the distrust of drama as a practice is one that traces back through the Middle Ages into Antiquity. In both patristic and early medieval sources, writers were wary of drama’s ability to move and affect audiences. These same writers nevertheless co-opted drama and theatrical spectacle for these very reasons in their own writing, hoping to use the affective power of performance to further instill Christian doctrine within the greater community. In Chapters One and Four, I examine how scholars like Augustine and Gregory the Great dwell at length on the (dis)advantages of theatricality, as they devise methods for incorporating and explaining the use of drama in devotional reading and warning readers against becoming enamored with dramatic rhetoric itself.¹¹ Authors across these periods thus became tasked with keeping this balance,

¹⁰ Margaret Cavendish, “Letter 29,” 40.

¹¹ While Cavendish seems to use her mind-stage as a loophole around the ban on theater, she too is following contemporary advice on devotion and decorum. Richard Braithwaite, who writes the guidebook *The English Gentlewoman*, states, “Make your chamber your private Theater, wherein you may act some devout Scene to God’s honour. Be still from the world, bur stirring towards God. Meditation, let it bee your companion...Let it bee your key to open the Morning,

using dramatic spectacle to make their didactic texts more compelling, while inserting disclaimers that caution overindulgence.

The paradoxical nature of this metaphor speaks to the creative potentiality of the mind as a theatrical space, in which anything is possible as long as the imagination wills it so.¹² The stage as a descriptor for the process of reflection allows Cavendish to separate out “parts” of herself when, in reality, she is actor, spectator, and playwright all at the same time. It is the productivity of dividing the self into parts, or characters, that I particularly want to draw attention to in early medieval texts. In the first three chapters, for example, the “I” of each text is split to create multiple subjects; the *Soliloquies* features an inner dialogue between the character Agustinus and his own Reason, the *Psychomachia* follows a battle between seven Virtues and Vices that occurs entirely within one psyche, and *Vercelli Homily IV* presents a divided soul and body at the moment of Last Judgment. By splitting the psyche and using those facets to play out specific narratives, readers are able to turn further inward towards the inner-self, all while adding a dynamic vitality to their daily meditation. Examining this process in which facets of the self perform upon the mind-stage allows us to think about early medieval devotion as a creative

your lock to close the Evening.” In connecting the theater with meditation, Braithwaite commandeers the power of drama and uses it for devotion. Using the mind to stage social and doctrinal quaestiones, as both Cavendish and Braithwaite suggest, allows individuals to privately creatively work through problems away from the world’s probing eyes. It is certainly true that Cavendish creates the mind-stage in part because of the seventeenth century ban on theatrical performances—and yet, more than a simple loophole, the quotes above also demonstrate her keen interest in using this inner stage as a space of unrestricted creativity and self-care.¹¹ The mind-stage allows her to write drama despite the restrictions on stage performances, while simultaneously giving her pleasure and allowing her to gain insight into her own “Incorporeal Thoughts.” Richard Braithwaite, *The English Gentlewoman* (London: Printed by John Dawson, 1641), 296.

¹² Richard Braithwaite, *The English Gentlewoman* (London: Printed by John Dawson, 1641), 296.

enterprise.¹³ In doing so, we can thereby reevaluate how medieval readers were called to use dramatic devotional texts as templates—how they could re-imagine scenes from a specific text just as Cavendish uses the original mountebank play as a starting point for her own imagination. When initially crafting this comparison, my driving questions were thus: what if medieval authors and readers were interested in this metaphor of the internal mind-stage? What happens if we as scholars allow ourselves to make connections, via Cavendish and also later medieval drama, that extend backward as well as forward?

It is with these questions in mind that this dissertation will take inspiration from genres like late medieval affective piety and closet drama to examine how medieval authors used dramatic spectacle to both animate the mind and to help readers craft a dynamic inner-self.¹⁴ In

¹³ Jody Enders' work on medieval torture and cruelty discusses the relationship between invention and drama; she examines the inherent violence of *inventio* while putting rhetoric in conversation with the proliferation of violent images in everyday life and on the medieval stage. She specifically discusses how creative invention often meant that the author must visualize violence. She argues that the violence of the *ars memorandi* might have "encouraged learned medieval writers and teachers to translate its images of torture and dismemberment into the theory and praxis of Christian didacticism." She goes on to conclude that "theater not only *was* violent, but that at some level, it *had to be* violent because it was unable to escape the conceptual and philological similarities among creative invention, dramatic catharsis, and human suffering that emerged from the rhetorical treatments of torture" (5). See further, Jody Enders, *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 5; 16; 61-2.

¹⁴ I'd like to thank Samantha Zacher again for her mentorship and guidance. Her work on tracing the care of the self from Classical Antiquity into the Late Middle Ages has helped shape my analysis of interiority across periods. See in particular, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), for a study of rhetorical techniques within the Vercelli Homilies that guide readers in experiencing devotion. See also *Rewriting the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon Verse: Becoming the Chosen People* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), for a discussion on the process of interiorization in *Exodus*—she specifically examines how the use of *ductus* encourages readers to develop both a habit of mind for contemplation and a personal covenant with God. Her graduate seminars, *Love and Ecstasy: Forms of Devotion in Medieval English Literature* and *Care of the Self in Anglo-Saxon England*, have similarly lead me to examine reading as performance, and to study the relevance of late medieval texts like the *Wohunge of Ure Laured* for understanding Anglo-Saxon devotion. It was in these courses that I was first introduced to the work of scholars who would

the introductory pages that follow, I introduce recent scholarship on the history of medieval drama and reading before examining how OE texts use performance to guide their readers through devotional practice. My project ultimately seeks to expand and refine categories of performativity and dramatic modes in medieval literature, and in the process to study an interactive mode of reading that has not been thoroughly explored. By turning to performance to evaluate reading practices in Anglo-Saxon England, I further dismantle assumptions about early medieval reading as passive reception. Instead, this project thinks about OE literature as compendia of dramatic dialogue and gesture that enliven the medieval reader's imagination.

Performance and Reading in Anglo-Saxon England:

When tracing the complexities of early medieval drama, the late O.B. Hardison suggested that medieval performance was a “multi-headed beast.”¹⁵ True to this metaphor, Anglo-Saxonists have long struggled to define the parameters of “drama,” both because the field spans a range of critical categories (such as performance studies, ritual, literacy, and orality), and also because the period largely lacks records of oral performance and designated play-spaces.¹⁶ In his 1949 study *The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons*, for example, George Anderson dedicates only six pages to

become my key interlocutors for this dissertation, including Sarah McNamer, Jessica Brantley, Mary Carruthers, and Michel Foucault.

¹⁰ This quote from Hardison comes from a seminar in 1981, and I have quoted it from Jody Enders, *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 15. See also: M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell press, 2002), p. 225.

¹⁶ While the literature on Old English drama is vast and spans both poetry and prose, the following four studies are often considered the foundation of drama scholarship in Anglo-Saxon England, and all four seek a coherent narrative or progression of drama in the period: E.K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903); Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933); O.B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1965). M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002).

Old English drama. Because no plays survive from the Anglo-Saxon period, Anderson concludes that some Old English texts “imply drama” or “illustrate a dramatic atmosphere,” but cannot be categorized as “real drama.”¹⁷ More specifically, although he examines texts like *Genesis B* and *Christ* and allows that they have a “semi-dramatic structure” based upon their use of dialogue, he finds that they are “expository rather than dramatic in purpose” and thus do not meet the standards of drama, which he only defines as having “true dramatic dialogue-composition.”¹⁸ Like scholars before and after him, Anderson found the greatest connection between Anglo-Saxon culture and drama within the liturgy, with special attention paid to texts like the *Visitatio Sepulchri* that feature explicit costuming and role instructions.¹⁹ E.K. Chambers, Karl Young, and David Dumville have likewise focused their attentions on the oral performance of these texts.²⁰ While acknowledging the dramatic nature of liturgical re-enactments such as the “Quem Quaeritis” tradition, they also understood the Old English liturgy as pre-drama, or ritualistic precursors to later medieval drama.

O.B. Hardison later complicated these arguments by challenging this evolutionary model, calling it “literary Darwinism” that features a teleological and romantic pattern of developing secularization.²¹ Building on Hardison’s work, M. Bradford Bedingfield has made significant strides in re-defining the dramatic parameters of the liturgy. Unlike Young, Chambers, or even Hardison, he understands the dramatic elements in texts like the *Visitatio Sepulchri* as symptoms

¹⁷ George Anderson, *The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 207

¹⁸ George Anderson, *The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons*, 208.

¹⁹ For more on the *Visitatio Sepulchri* and its dramatic functionality, see: Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy in Anglo-Saxon England*, 157-170. See also: Dunbar Ogden, “The *Visitatio Sepulchri*: Public Enactment and Hidden Rite,” in *The Dramatic Tradition in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clifford Davidson (New York: AMS, 2005), 28-35.

²⁰ David Dumville, “Liturgical drama and panegyric responsory from the eighth century? A re-examination of the origin and contents of the ninth-century section of the Book of Cerne,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, new ser., xxiii (1972), 374-406.

²¹ Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama*, 1-34.

of a unique tendency in Anglo-Saxon England to engage lay audiences in the liturgy.²² He argues that homilies enhance the dramatic participation of worshippers within Mass by drawing the audience into a re-enactment of sacred history. Bedingfield's work can be used as a springboard for expanding our understanding of early Old English drama and to investigate these issues of audience participation. His work on dramatic liturgy has led early medieval scholarship to expand our investigation of drama and performance out into non-liturgical texts, and also to incorporate a broader range of theoretical frameworks and schema in our analyses.²³ Allen Frantzen, for example, citing Bedingfield's work on performative ritual expression, examines the complex "feedback process" that occurs between audience and performer, though his focus is on Old English poetry rather than the liturgy.²⁴ In locating drama in *Beowulf* and Cynewulf's *Juliana* using semiotics to "conceptualize drama as an exchange-driven process of communication," he discusses how dialogue and gesture require audience members to complete

²² Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy in Anglo-Saxon England*, 1-12.

²³ For example, Irina Dumitrescu uses performance theory in her recent article, "Violence, Performance, and Pedagogy in Aelfric Beta's Colloquies," *Exemplaria*, 23.1 (2011), 67-91, to "conceptualize the experience of children learning Latin using dialogues replete with discussions of fear and violence" (67). Jacob Rieff meanwhile categorizes Christ's speeches as dramatic in the trial scene of *Vercelli IV* in, "Dualism in Old English Literature: The Body and Soul Theme and Vercelli Homily IV," *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 112, No. 3 (2015). In Dorothy Haines' work on prose monologues, she highlights the dramatic activity in Vercelli homilies by identifying stage directions, dramatic tone, and distinct characters within the texts; she argues it is conceivable that "a skilled preacher, following these clues provided in the text, might well have been able to take each part in turn and thereby create a minidrama." Dorothy Haines, "Courtroom Drama and the Homiletic Monologues of *The Vercelli Book*," *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank*. Antonina Harbus, Russell Poole, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 113.

²⁴ Allen Frantzen, "Drama," in *Anglo-Saxon Keywords* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 75-6. Frantzen, "Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry," 105. Concerning this concept of "feedback process," Joyce Coleman argues, "In a bardic or minstrel performance, everything from the choice of genre and of text, along with many decisions about the emphases within and the length of the text, would be subject to feedback process." See further: Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 29.

each narrative or performance with their own experience or imagination.²⁵ Frantzen nevertheless limits his discussion of this “feedback process” to oral drama and the ways in which present audiences might have affectively reacted to staged performances.²⁶ While his use of semiotics has provided invaluable insight into the dramatic nature of these poems, his search to recuperate how they were performed in front of an audience is only one half of the story, for it bypasses how the performative elements inherent in the narratives affected readers who experienced the text in manuscript form.

Other medieval scholars such as Paul Zumthor, Mark Amodio, and Jill Stevenson have turned instead to the performative nature of reading itself as a marker of drama. Zumthor’s work on performance recognizes that readers play a performative role in the text itself as they reimagine narrative—so much so that personal re-imaginings of a devotional text can both enhance and develop individual prayer, allowing a reader’s experience with a text to become a kind of sacred performance.²⁷ In *Writing and the Oral Tradition*, Mark Amodio likewise suggests that medieval readers in a literate society play a necessary active role in forming and reforming texts with each reading—and perhaps most importantly, that readers shape the text and its reception in ways that are similar to how listeners in oral cultures co-create the texts they

²⁵ Frantzen, “Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry,” 105.

²⁶ Frantzen explicitly states, “My objective is to get the drama of Anglo-Saxon England off the page and into the world of semiotic communication...Although my examples used in this essay are drawn from Anglo-Saxon narrative poetry, my argument about dialogue and drama applies equally well to comparable orally performed poems in Middle English....” Frantzen, “Drama and Dialogue,” 100.

²⁷ Paul Zumthor, *Performance, Réception, Lecture* (Longueuil: Les Editions du Préambule, 1990), 76-7. Sylvia Huot has also suggested that scribes act as intermediaries between their audiences and their stories by assuming “a role analogous to the poet-performer,” thereby transforming the book pages into a space for enacting performance. See further: Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 26.

receive aurally.²⁸ Jill Stevenson has studied this method of devotion in late medieval texts, calling it “performance literacy.”²⁹ With her focus on late medieval devotional media that spans from architecture to art, Stevenson argues that medieval laypeople mentally respond to the “thingness” of devotional texts just as they would to a live performance. Like bodies and objects that are staged in actual performance, devotional texts and images beget in viewers’ minds devotional patterns. She refers to this as a “cognitive template” that is embedded within each layperson “through live presence at and with the rhythmic actuality of these live events.”²⁹ These studies all share an interest in the communication process between text, reader, and listener, and, perhaps most importantly, they all highlight the ways in which readers can become actors who both internally and externally perform the text as they read.

Sarah McNamer’s study of affect in late medieval texts like *The Wooing of Our Lord* can help to elucidate this relationship between performance, reader, and text even further; she argues that medieval texts requiring readerly enactment and engagement should be considered “intimate scripts” and “performative models” that incite readers to privately perform emotion.³⁰ Her notion of “scripting” is especially productive for dramatic early medieval texts because it acknowledges and frames the texts’ performative elements without prioritizing the logistics and likelihood of oral delivery. Though many have used the term “script” as a synonym for discourse, I follow McNamer in taking a literal approach to the term—referring to texts that literally script the

²⁸ Mark Amodio, *Writing in the Oral Tradition: Oral Poetics and Literate Culture in Medieval England* (Illinois: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 8-9.

²⁹ See further: Jill Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture: Sensual Piety in Late Medieval York* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 41-46, at 41.

³⁰ For McNamer, these emotions most often center on the body of Christ in an effort to envision and experience the Crucifixion. See further: Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, 13.

performance of compassion and salvific action to be staged in a “private drama of the heart.”³¹

The criteria for this type of performative scripting are as follows: first, scripted texts call out to readers and create a path or *weig* for them to follow; second, they are composed in the first person and in present tense; and third, they use vivid imagined scenes that cast readers as participants.³² McNamer discusses the presence of this ‘scripting’ phenomenon in late medieval devotional lyrics as when, for example, *The Wooing of Our Lord* intersperses the first-person singular within the Passion scene in order to offer readers an impassioned voice that they can make their own.³³ In this project, however, I use these criteria to expand the scope of this argument, examining the dramatic nature of Old English poetry and prose, which similarly cast the reader as both eyewitness and protagonist using dialogue, tense, and narratorial perspective. The goal of considering early medieval texts as dramatic scripts is to further elucidate how medieval readers retained and recalled devotional scenes during the iterative process of *meditatio*.

In medieval scholarship, scholars often use *memoria* to frame questions of *meditatio* and reading. In the *Craft of Thought*, for example, Mary Carruthers discusses a concept called “rhetorical *ductus*,” in which an author uses rhetorical devices to keep the reader’s mind ‘on track’.³⁴ *Ductus* is a path or way through a text that is marked by figurative language—it is the

³¹ Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Compassion*, 3; 12-13. For information on the centrality and concept of the *ingebance*, or inner self, in Anglo-Saxon England, see: Britt Mize, “The Representation of the Mind as an enclosure in OE Poetry,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 35 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 57-90. See also Leslie Locket’s fantastic study on the psychological inheritance of the Anglo-Saxons in: *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

³² Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Compassion*, 12.

³³ Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Compassion*, 30.

³⁴ Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 77. See also: Mary Carruthers, *Book of Memory: A*

way a text guides readers using rhetorical *colores* (colors) and *modus* (modes) which are “like the individual segments of an aqueduct, carrying the water, yes, but changing its direction, slowing it down, speeding it up, bifurcating, as the water moves along its ‘route’ or ‘way’.”³⁵ A text’s dynamic figurative language in turn supplies readers with a series of concrete mental images that aided with recollection. In this way, mnemonic training often includes thinking in spatial terms so that readers could assign a particular image or “address” to each piece of information to order the memory for easier recall.³⁶ Mnemonics (whether created via metaphor, dialogue, or imagery) lead readers through the text by signaling different subject matter, moods, and intentions.³⁷ Texts therefore present readers with multiple paths through each narrative—while one road may be easy, another will be treacherous, marked with rhetorical obstacles that readers must interpret to fully overcome and gain understanding. This path or road through each text (Mary Carruthers calls it an “aqueduct” that branches through the text) allows readers to choose what they glean from the narrative, just as the author initially chose their placement and sequencing.³⁸

In her book *Rewriting the Old Testament*, Samantha Zacher employs Carruthers’ notion of *ductus* to examine the performative process of reading in the Old English poem *Exodus*. She defines the poem as a “vivid stockpiling of images [that] is linked by only the barest narrative structure.”³⁹ Readers gather and remember these images to create a “treasure chamber” of

Study of Memory in Medieval Culture, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 31.

³⁵ Mary Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 78.

³⁶ Mary Carruthers states, “it is apparent from the metaphors they chose to model the process of memory that the *imagines* were thought in some way to occupy space.” See further: Mary Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 31.

³⁷ Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 117.

³⁸ Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 117.

³⁹ Samantha Zacher, *Rewriting the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon Verse: Becoming the Chosen People* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 63.

compiled data, which can then be used, as Zacher argues, to “implement chains of stories to facilitate a habit of mind.”⁴⁰ The act of internalizing the images in *Exodus*, and creating a chain of associations that aid in exegesis, then guides the medieval reader to develop a personal covenant for contemplation.⁴¹ Zacher connects this process of memory with Augustine’s concept of the *homo interior* (inner-man), which allows readers to gain understanding through Christ as Inner-Teacher; she argues that the ‘inner-man’, like memory, ultimately functions as a “processing plant that stores sense memories and allows them to be brought up again for rumination.”⁴²

In Chapters One and Two of this dissertation, we see the same reading process that Zacher outlines in *Exodus* at work within the Old English *Soliloquies* and the *Psychomachia*, which both require readers to collect specific *cwidas* (sayings) and images to create a *habitus* for devotion. In the *Soliloquies*’ Preface, for example, the speaker implies that readers who gather data from the main text and store them within the mind will be set on the *weig* (road) to salvation. For the medieval reader, the process of reading and gathering useful information into memory mirrors the Preface speaker’s process of gathering and molding useful *cwidas* during the translation process. The *Psychomachia*, which begins with the parable of Abraham saving Lot from the wicked kings of Sodom and Gomorra, explicitly describes both the story of Abraham and the larger narrative of the text as a *linea* (line or path) that readers should follow as a model. The *Soliloquies* and the *Psychomachia* both illustrate Carruthers’ concept of “rhetorical ductus”—while the former leads readers through the text via a fast-paced dialogue and deictic

⁴⁰ Samantha Zacher, *Rewriting the Old Testament*, 65. See also: Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 77-81, and Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 43.

⁴¹ Samantha Zacher, *Rewriting the Old Testament*, 70-79.

⁴² Samantha Zacher, *Rewriting the Old Testament*, 75. See also: Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, *Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol. 2, ed. John Hammond Taylor (New York: The Newman Press, 1982), p. 191-2.

markers, the latter guides readers through a series of paratactic grotesque images that are reinforced through the corresponding manuscript illuminations in the extant Old English versions.

In order to generate affective responses and thereby increase a text's devotional productivity for readers, Anglo-Saxon authors presented didactic material as attractively or vividly as possible through both dialogue and mnemonic imagery.⁴³ As I will discuss in Chapter One, for example, Alfred uses architectural images, which range in sophistication and ornamentation from building a rough cottage to the detailed crafting of a ship. Like these structures in Alfred's *Soliloquies*, the use of architectural images in medieval texts could be simple structures, or they could be elaborate layering of individual interpretations or glosses on top of a scriptural 'foundation'.⁴⁴ Moving into Chapter Two and Three on the *Psychomachia* and *Vercelli Homily IV*, I turn towards texts that use images of the body to produce the fear of sin and Judgment Day. In the *Psychomachia*, for example, Prudentius details the gruesome aspects of battle, and focuses specifically on the dismemberment of allegorized Vices; *Vercelli Homily IV*, meanwhile, contains a lengthy description of the body, which slowly decomposes in the grave—this text asks the reader to substitute himself or herself for the grave-bound body as they imagine their eventual trial before God. Chapter Four's discussion of *The Dream of the Rood* culminates in an extended description of the Crucifixion in which readers visualize the creation of the wooden cross only to become a witness to Christ's subsequent torture. Yet it sounds as though you're claiming it does. The ekphrastic imagery that permeates each of these works incites readers to perform emotions such as fear, sorrow, and awe, providing a way (*weig* or *linea*) for

⁴³ Dorothy Haines. "Courtroom Drama and the Homiletic Monologues of *The Vercelli Book*," *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank*, Antonia Harbus and Russell Poole, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 105.

⁴⁴ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 14.

readers to navigate both the narrative and the affective responses that each text incites them to perform.

In the chapters that follow, I examine how medieval texts use dramatic dialogue and bodily imagery to guide readers as interactive spiritual exercises. In his *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, contemporary scholar Pierre Hadot defines ‘spiritual exercise’ as either a text or habit that is “designed to ensure spiritual progress toward the ideal wisdom, exercises of reason that will be, for the soul, analogous to the athlete’s training or to the application of a medical cure.”⁴⁵ Most importantly, as he goes on to observe, spiritual exercises require the individual to radically alter his or her world-view by turning away from worldly passion and by cultivating a “continuous vigilance and presence of mind, a self-consciousness which never sleeps, and a constant tension of the spirit”⁴⁶ While he argues that Greco-Roman philosophical schools practiced this type of spiritual exercise, the medieval period is no exception; this concept is thus also apt for describing the process of iterative meditation and reflection that medieval readers performed in their daily lives.

The purpose of the affective imagery and rhetorical *figura* discussed above is to facilitate productive habits of mind in order to develop a more coherent inner self. The object of the spiritual exercise is transformation from what Hadot calls “darkened unconsciousness” to an exact vision of the self as a subject.⁴⁷ In each of the four case studies I examine below, the texts explicitly call for readers to engage in this same process of transformation, from dark to light and from ignorance to understanding. To develop the constant vigilance of the soul that was

⁴⁵ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Oxford, 1995), 97. He goes on to suggest that these spiritual exercises consist of self-control and meditation. For a discussion of this same type of soul-searching in Augustine, see also: Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la culture antique*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1958), 297-327.

⁴⁶ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 84.

⁴⁷ Although he devotes most of his attention to oral instruction, the exercise of meditation that he outlines must also be cultivated through reading. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 83.

necessary to attain salvation, medieval devotees could rely on a series of performative formulae (that imitate oral instruction) in the texts that they read, or as Hadot calls them, “psychagogic techniques and rhetorical methods of amplification.”⁴⁸ These techniques often included the use of pathos, first person narrative voice, and rhetorical *figura* like comparison, copia, and climax, which enable readers to re-imagine entire scenarios within the mind.⁴⁹ The texts that utilize these “psychagogic techniques” acted as initial templates that both scripted specific roles for readers and provided food for further meditation. Ultimately, the essential characteristic of spiritual exercises is that they have no conclusion—in other words, the reader’s work is never completed but instead continues *ad infinitum* in preparation for Judgment Day. The devotee is thus invited to act out the narrative within the mind each and every time he or she reads the text and engages in private meditation.

In his essay “The Writer’s Audience is Always a Fiction,” Walter Ong discusses reader roles and performance from a different angle, focusing first on the author’s process of invention. When authors write, he argues, they must create a reader or audience in their own minds, casting these readers in specific roles (those seeking pleasure, entertainment, reflection, etc.) in order to

⁴⁸ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 85.

⁴⁹ An interesting modern iteration of this idea is psychodrama, which is often used in psychotherapy. Individuals who practice psychodrama as an experiential method of therapy envision specific scenarios in order to play out their fears and desires, or also to gain insight into their own psyches. Developed by John Moreno in the early twentieth century, psychodrama uses techniques such as mirroring, doubling, soliloquy, and role-playing to allow participants to explore their inner emotions and to resolve conflict in virtual reality set apart from the present. The links between this form of therapy and the performative form of meditation I discuss in this dissertation are clear; using a modern framework like psychodrama, although there is the possibility for anachronism, is useful for thinking about reader response—especially regarding the effectiveness of role-playing and the impact performing these scenes has on the individual’s self-knowledge. For more on the history and practice of psychodrama, see further: Eva Røine, *Psychodrama: Group Psychotherapy as Experimental Theatre* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1997), 15-82; Marcia Karp, Paul Holmes, and Kate Bradshaw Tauvon, eds., *The Handbook of Psychodrama* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

even begin the writing process.⁵⁰ According to Ong, authors who wrote their texts down were forced to fictionalize their audience in a way that those who composed or recited texts orally did not, for they did not have access to readers who were physically present. Because of this distance, they were tasked with both visualizing and engaging their readers using person, space, and time deixis, which are direct exchanges indexed by pronouns, demonstratives, or abstract phrases. So, for example, uttering or writing the phrase “hey you over there, don’t do that!” points outside of the phrase itself to an existing “you” and “that,” both of which must be filled in for the text to be complete. Ong uses Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms* as an example, pointing to the text’s lack of description and its liberal use of the demonstrative pronoun “that” to cast the reader as a “companion-in-arms” who *knows* what is going on without having the narrative fully explained.⁵¹ Jean Alter examines this phenomenon in his work on theater and semiotics—he argues that deixis allows readers to engage in “creative world-building” in which they must draw on their own experience or imagination to make the text concrete within their minds.⁵² Hemingway’s readers are therefore meant to feel as if they know these details of the story already, and unconsciously fill in their own contexts to complete the narrative.

⁵⁰ According to Ong, this process of authorial imagination is essential within the literary tradition, and has not yet been satisfactorily explored. He goes on to discuss this method of readership as a framework for studying genre and form: “A history of literature could be written in terms of the ways in which audiences have successively been fictionalized from the time when writing broke away from oral performance, for, just as each genre grows out of what went before it, so each new role that readers are made to assume is related to previous roles” (12). See further: Walter Ong, “The Writer’s Audience is Always a Fiction,” *PMLA*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (1975): 9-21, at 9-12.

⁵¹ An example of this from Hemingway would be the phrase “In the late year of that summer we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains.” Readers are never told which year the text takes place, nor are they told anything more about the specific context of the house, the plain, the river, or the mountains. See further: Walter Ong, “The Writer’s Audience is Always a Fiction,” 13.

⁵² This type of language is often found in early medieval liturgy and later drama, because it requires a visual or performative gesture like pointing to clarify the indexed pronouns. For more on creative world-building, see further: Jean Alter, *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 97-98.

Ong blatantly asks: “Could readers of an earlier age have managed the Hemingway relationship, the you-and-me relationship, marked by tight-lipped empathy based on shared experience?” He argues no, based on a reading of Virgil’s *Aeneid* which he deems engaging but not interactive.⁵³ As we will see in my first three chapters, however, classical and medieval texts *did* utilize this form of interactive reading in which the reader is called to imagine himself or herself as co-protagonist, or even the main protagonist. Chapters One and Three, respectively on Augustine’s *Soliloquies* and the soul and body homily *Vercelli IV*, both use person deixis to encourage readerly empathy and substitution. The *Soliloquies* occurs within a single individual mind and features an internal dialogue between an abstract *ic* (I) and his or her own reason, who is referred to only as *heo* (her). In Chapter Three, *Vercelli IV* likewise features a dynamic dialogue between an unnamed soul and body, who are designated only as *ic* and *pu* (you) throughout the homily. The two sets of abstract referents in these texts (*ic* and *heo*, and *ic* and *pu*) incite readers to fill in the missing context and imagine facets of their own psyche as the main characters. Peter Stockwell refers to this practice as “deictic projection,” in which readers are able to shift their world-view, become another character, and visualize themselves within a specific narrative. Person deixis in the *Soliloquies* and *Vercelli IV* gives way to the use of spatial deixis in Chapter Two within Prudentius *Psychomachia*. This poem, like the *Soliloquies*, is located within a single individual mind, which is then split into seven pairs of Virtues and Vices; despite the variety of characters in this text, there is no provided context regarding the specific *psyche* in the *psychomachia* (battle of the soul). Readers are therefore meant to again insert themselves into the story and re-imagine their own psyche as the text’s setting. According to Ong, to successfully interpret or engage with a text, readers must play the roles that authors assign to them, whether or not these roles are familiar or comfortable. In all three of these texts

⁵³ Walter Ong, “The Writer’s Audience is Always a Fiction,” 14.

that I've outlined above, the reader is forced to imagine themselves in roles that are didactic even if they are not pleasurable, from a rotting corpse to a battle-torn psyche under attack from Vice. It is precisely this intimacy between author, text, and reader, along with the elision of the reader's present and the text's present, that makes these poetic and prose works compelling for medieval readers.

Private Reading and the Self:

It's worth pausing here to again underscore how, during the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, performing spiritual exercises was linked with habits of reading.⁵⁴ as well as how early medieval readers might have reading on a physical level Hadot has observed that individuals nourish the mind and perform spiritual exercises by first interpreting the written word. He accordingly states: "It is relatively simple to provide food for meditation: one could read the sayings of the poets and philosophers, for example, or the *apophthegmata* [pre-meditation of misfortunes]. 'Reading', however, could also include the explanation of specifically philosophical texts, works written by teachers in philosophical schools. Such texts could be read or heard within the framework of the philosophical instruction given by a professor."⁵⁵ Hadot's definition conveniently leaves room for understanding medieval reading as both a private and a communal practice.⁵⁶ Although medieval scholars have attempted to tackle the question of readership, the debate about oral and silent reading in the early Middle Ages remains open. Traditionally, most scholars have argued that silent reading was the exception

⁵⁴ Brian Stock, *After Augustine*, 1.

⁵⁵ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 86.

⁵⁶ Scholars like Mary Clayton and Milton Gatch have worked to categorize OE devotional texts (especially homilies) by their function as preaching texts and private readers. See further: Mary Clayton, "Homilies and Preaching in Anglo-Saxon England," *Peritia* 4 (1985): 207-242; Milton Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Aelfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 27-59.

rather than the rule in the early Middle Ages—specifically, that every example of silent reading had an element of oral delivery. As David Dumville has argued, even if a medieval reader was reading in private, they would produce noise “whose minimal level would presumably be a mumble.”⁵⁷ In the same vein, Nicholas Howe draws on ethnographic sources to argue that reading was “a communal act” and a “performative event” in Anglo-Saxon England.⁵⁸ On the opposite side of the spectrum, however, scholars like M.B. Parkes and Paul Saenger have engaged with manuscript culture to demonstrate how Anglo-Saxons used “a complex of new graphic conventions” to facilitate silent and private reading as a supplement to oral reading.⁵⁹

While it may be true, as Howe suggests, that reading in the early Middle Ages was often conducted under “largely oral conditions,” it’s nevertheless important for us to consider the other side of the coin—the notion of private reading in which individual devotees read on their own, distanced from the noise of the community.⁶⁰ After all, as Stock has argued, “there is in fact no clear point of transition from a nonliterate to a literate society,” just as there is no way to pinpoint the exact date when society largely transitioned from reading out loud to reading silently.⁶¹ What is clear, however, is that opening the discussion up to include a more

⁵⁷ See further: David Dumville, “*Beowulf* and the Celtic World: The Uses of Evidence,” *Traditio* 37 (1981): 109-160, at 157. See also: Paul Saenger, *The Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 202-204; J. Balogh, “*Voces Paginarum*: Beiträge zur Geschichte des lauten Lesens und Schreibens,” *Philologus* 82 (1926-1927): 84-109; 202-240. See also: Richard Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 78-81.

⁵⁸ Nicholas Howe, “The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England,” in *The Ethnography of Reading*, Jonathan Boyarin, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 58-79.

⁵⁹ M.B. Parkes, “*Rædan, Areccan, Smeagan*: How the Anglo-Saxons Read,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 26 (1997): 1-22. For an excellent overview on recent scholarship, see: John D. Niles, ed., *Old English Literature: A Guide to Criticism with Selected Readings* (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016).

⁶⁰ Nicholas Howe, “The Cultural Construction of Reading,” 68.

⁶¹ Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 9. While I

internalized, silent reading practice in the early Middle Ages can help us rethink how Anglo-Saxons understood the development of interiority and the self.

As the most influential voice on the devotional practice and the self in the Middle Ages, Augustine's work on devotion and reading practice is a fruitful place to begin. His examination of private or meditative reading was available to medieval writers and readers through both Latin and Old English copies of his work.⁶² In the *Confessions*, Augustine ruminates at length on the benefits of silent reading and oral reading; in Book VI, he recounts a scene in which he observes his teacher Ambrose reading alone in his garden:

“aut corpus reficiebat necessariis sustentaculis aut lectione animum. sed cum legebat, oculi ducebantur per paginas et cor intellectum rimabatur, vox autem et lingua quiescebant. saepe, cum adessemus -- non enim vetabatur quisquam ingredi aut ei venientem nuntiari mos erat -- sic eum legentem vidimus tacite et aliter numquam, sedentesque in diuturno silentio -- quis enim tam intento esse oneri auderet? -- discedebamus; et coniectabamus eum parvo ipso tempore, quod reparandae menti suae nanciscebatur, feriatum ab strepitu causarum alienarum, nolle in aliud avocari; et cavere fortasse, ne auditore suspenso et intento, si qua obscurius posuisset ille quem legeret, etiam exponere esset necesse aut de aliquibus difficilioribus dissertare quaestionibus; atque huic operi temporibus impensis minus quam vellet voluminum evolveret: quamquam et causa servandae vocis, quae illi facillime obtundebatur, poterat esse iustior tacite legendi. quolibet tamen animo id ageret, bono utique ille vir agebat” (VI.3).⁶³

(He was either refreshing his body with the sustenance absolutely necessary, or his mind with reading. But when he was reading, his eye glided over the pages, and his heart

fully acknowledge the importance of oral delivery in reading practice and in the very make-up of our extant Anglo-Saxon devotional texts, stopping the discussion of oral and silent reading here without digging further into the possibilities of what devotional texts like the *Regularis Concordia* dictate when it says stymies the discussion.

⁶² For a discussion of the available texts from Augustine, see further: Clemens Weidmann, “Augustine’s Works in Circulation,” in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 431-449; Jesse Keshiaho, *Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages: The Reception and Use of Patristic Ideas, 400-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 17-19; 223-247. See also: Willemien Otten, “The Texture of Tradition: The Role of the Church Fathers in Carolingian Theology,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 3-50.

⁶³ Augustine, *Confessions*, 2 vols. Trans, William Watts (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), VI.3. Cf. Brian Stock, *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue: The Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 29-33.

searched out the sense, but his voice and tongue were at rest. Often when we had come (for no man was forbidden to enter, nor was it his wont that any who came should be announced to him), we saw him reading thus to himself, and never otherwise; and having long sat silent, for who dares to intrude on one so intent, we were fain to depart, conjecturing that in the small interval which he obtained, free from the din of others' business, for the recruiting of his mind, he was loath to be taken off and perchance he dreaded lest if the author he read should deliver anything obscurely, some attentive or perplexed hearer should desire him to expound it, or to discuss some of the harder questions; so that his time being thus spent, he could not turn over so many volumes as he desired; although the preserving of his voice (which a very little speaking would weaken) might be the truer reason for his reading to himself. But with what intent whatsoever he did it, certainly in such a man it was good).

Augustine here describes a scene in which Ambrose sits in his garden reading to himself in solitude. What surprises him is not that Ambrose reads alone, but instead that he reads without sounding out the words or moving his lips. This carefully worded description highlights the fact that Ambrose would read this way even when he had an audience, who was hesitant to ever disturb or intrude upon this solitary activity. Augustine next tries to guess at his purpose, musing that Ambrose was either preserving his voice, or that he was weary of expounding difficult ideas to his followers, and so began to read silently so that he could get more work accomplished without interruption.

By ending this passage with the statement “*quolibet tamen animo id ageret, bono utique ille vir agebat*” (But with what intent whatsoever he did it, certainly in such a man it was good), Augustine ultimately leaves Ambrose's reading habits open to interpretation. This ambiguity in turn makes readers consider closely (as Augustine does) the role of silent reading within meditation. For example, after explaining that Ambrose refreshes the body and mind respectively with food and reading, he qualifies, “*sed cum legebat, oculi ducebantur per paginas et cor intellectum rimabatur vox autem et lingua quiescebant*” (But when he was reading, his eyes glided over the pages, and his heart searched out the sense but his voice and tongue were at rest). His use of *sed* (but) in this clause emphasizes that silent reading is or was not a habitual practice

for most scholars—while it is normal that reading and sustenance would refresh the mind and body, the *sed* separates the usual practice of reading from Ambrose’s habits, thereby making its place within everyday devotional practice uncertain.

Nicholas Howe has extensively examined the passage above, focusing on Augustine’s wonder as an indication that reading is primarily a shared communal practice in the Middle Ages.⁶⁴ He accordingly concludes, “This sense of wonder belongs, then, to a man who believed that the way to truth was through the written word as performed or interpreted within a community.”⁶⁵ In his work on medieval reading, Howe brings to bear Augustine’s uncertainty regarding silent reading and Brian Stock’s conception of a “textual community” into the Anglo-Saxon period by examining the etymology of Old English words like *rædan* (to read) alongside several scenes of communal reading.⁶⁶ Specifically, he argues that the etymological meaning of *ræd* as “giving counsel” and “explaining something obscure” indicates that reading aloud within a group of people is the primary definitional parameter of this term.⁶⁷ Howe and other scholars such as Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe have followed the etymology of “explaining something obscure” to compare the act of reading to both explaining a riddle and providing illumination—as Howe suggests, “what was alien, opaque, seemingly without meaning, becomes familiar, transparent, and meaningful when read aloud by those initiated in the solution of such enigma.

⁶⁴ For more on literacy and reading practice in early England, see: Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Seth Lerer, *Literacy and Power in Old English Verse* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 195. Cf. Nicholas Howe, “The Cultural Construction of Reading,” 61.

⁶⁵ Nicholas Howe, “The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England,” 60.

⁶⁶ Stock defines the parameters of a “textual community”: “What was essential for a textual community, whether large or small, was simply a text, an interpreter, and a public. The text did not have to be written; oral record, memory, and a reperformance sufficed. Nor did the public have to be fully lettered. Often, in fact, only the *interpretes* had a direct contact with literate culture, and, like the twelfth-century heretic Peter Waldo, memorized and communicated his gospel by word of mouth.” See further: Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, 37. Cited from: Nicholas Howe, “The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England,” 59.

⁶⁷ Howe, “The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England,” 58-68.

Without the dimension of oral performance, reading of this sort could not be perceived by nonliterate as the solving of a mystery. The squiggles must be made to speak.”⁶⁸ By focusing on reading as spoken discourse and counsel, his excellent exploration of the oral conditions of *rædan* nevertheless overlooks private reading practices in which readers engaged in texts apart from the immediate community.

Although it seems as if Augustine primarily read devotional texts aloud or in public because he felt drawn to remark on Ambrose’s actions, Augustine writes elsewhere that private meditation through individual reading is necessary for attaining wisdom.⁶⁹ By its very nature, his *Soliloquia*, and subsequently Alfred’s Old English translation, are both exercises in self-consciousness in which reading a private internal dialogue helps devotees to construct a *homo interior* (inner-man).⁷⁰ In Chapter One, accordingly, we shall see that the *Soliloquia* is predicated on the belief that individuals come to know God and the self through the contemplative practice of reading. In the *Soliloquia*, the text opens with Augustine engaging in a silent discussion with himself (*volventi mihi...ac...mecum*) so that he can better know how to perform good works.⁷¹ After the voice identifies herself as his own personified reason (Ratio), she encourages him to write down their reflections: “Ergo scribendum est. Sed quid agis, quod valetudo tua scribendi

⁶⁸ Nicholas Howe, “The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England,” 63. On the practice of reading aloud in the Anglo-Saxon period, see further: Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse*, 21.

⁶⁹ For an extensive discussion of both how and where Augustine analyzes this topic, see further: Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, 61-65. See also: Brian Stock, *After Augustine: The Meditative Reader and the Text* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Steven Roger Fischer, *A History of Reading* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003).

⁷⁰ As I will analyze further in Chapter One, it is clear that Anglo-Saxon authors and translators were interested in these dialogues as a form of devotion—Alfred’s translation of Boethius’ *Consolatio* is another example in which reading an interior dialogue gives readers a script to perform the same dialogue within their own minds.

⁷¹ Augustine, *Soliloquies and the Immortality of the Soul*, ed. and trans. G. Watson (Warminster, 1990), Book I.1. For another edition, see: Augustine, *Soliloquiorum Libri Duo; De Immortalitate Animae; De Quantitate Animae*, Wolfgang Hörmann, ed. *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera*, CSEL 89 (Vienna, 1986).

laborem recusat? Nec ista dictari debent; nam solitudinem meram desiderant” (I.1) (Therefore, it must be written. But what are you going to do because your health will not allow the hard work necessary for writing? For these things should not be dictated; they demand absolute solitude). In Ratio’s explanation, not only must Augustine write everything down so that they can better remember and engage in the discussion, but the entire dialogue itself should be performed in private away from others. When the text is written down, it will encourage Augustine to continue the discussion; it is thus the combination of writing and private reading that eventually produces the desired knowledge of God and the self in this case. Stock aptly observes that, for Augustine, when individuals read silently, “a psychological mechanism and a philosophical ideal became one.”⁷² In other words, the process of silent reading is “an *exemplum* of self-reliance within a scheme of reliance on God...it is difficult to see Christ in a crowd...God can be perceived only in the solitude of intention.”⁷³ To conclude that Augustine establishes reading practice only in terms of reading aloud within a community is therefore to neglect a significant facet of developing and tending the individual self across his work; such a conclusion also potentially closes off a wide avenue of study that could help us better understand how Late Antique notions of the individual self were understood in the early Middle Ages.

The image of the silent reader becomes increasingly linked with individual contemplation for medieval writers based on their engagement with texts from Augustine and Gregory—silent reading allows the individual to attain what Stock calls “controlled interiority.”⁷⁴ He expounds upon this idea in his detailed work on Augustine, arguing that readers achieve this interiority by practicing “meditative silence” when they engage with devotional texts; this term does not refer to sound, but instead it implies “a nonperceptible presence: the absence of sound, which is

⁷² Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, 62.

⁷³ Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, 62.

⁷⁴ Brian Stock, *After Augustine*, 62.

perceived by the senses, was a confirmation of this presence, since the text of the Bible, in which divine being was thought to reside, was silent until it was read, and silent again after the oral reading was finished and the meditation had begun.”⁷⁵ Just as Ratio explains in the *Soliloquia*, reading the internal dialogue provides a foundation for *meditatio* while also directing the senses inward, away from the corporeal senses to what Augustine calls the *sensus animis* (senses of the mind).⁷⁶

Early medieval writers continued to be deeply concerned with parsing the relationship between the individual and the community.⁷⁷ The question of silent reading, as we see in the above example with Augustine and Ambrose, was intertwined with questions of individual devotional practice for authors in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages—reading within the community and reading individually were different facets of devotional productivity, and each provided a different service or affect for medieval readers. Texts like the *Rule of St. Benedict* and

⁷⁵ Brian Stock, *After Augustine*, 16.

⁷⁶ As I discuss in Chapter One, Alfred later translates this phrase as *modes eagan* (eyes of the mind). Alfred’s translation heavily emphasizes the switch between corporeal and spiritual vision—his emphasis makes sense based on the translation’s overall interest in both the relationship and the transition between corporeal and spiritual experience.

⁷⁷ In his study of reading practice, Paul Saenger examines the movement from oral to silent reading from Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages. He argues that the origin of rapid silent reading “lies in the scribal techniques and grammatical teachings that developed in Ireland and England in the seventh and eighth centuries.” In doing so, he primarily examines the presence of space and punctuation between words in ancient and medieval manuscripts. The shift between oral and silent reading, he argues, occurs because of the increased separation between words in medieval manuscripts that allow readers to move quickly through each text without orally sounding out the words—whereas manuscripts in late ancient manuscripts were often written in *scriptura continua* as large blocks of texts separated by minimal punctuation, manuscripts written in the British Isles beginning in the late 7th century became *aerated*, or separated by space that allowed readers to decode each word visually. While Saenger’s account sheds a much needed light on how manuscript composition affected the way medieval readers moved through a text on a physical level, his work largely sidesteps how both of these reading methodologies can benefit the medieval reader in different ways. Paul Saenger, “Insular Culture and Word Separation in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries,” in *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1-14; 32-44; 83.

the *Regularis Concordia*, which were instrumental to the devotional life of Anglo-Saxon monasteries, can help elucidate the relationship between public and private reading. Both of these texts functioned as daily guides for medieval monks, prescribing rules and activities for the monastery, from when monks slept to what they ate to how they prayed. As David Knowles observes, “Life within the monastery is a common life of absolute regularity, of strict discipline, of unvarying routine.”⁷⁸ The *Rule* and the *Regularis Concordia* are primarily focused on engaging with the liturgy and prayer; both books describe in detail how monks can experience these in their daily life through both oral reading and private reading. The brothers practiced reading out loud constantly to cement the aural memory of their prayers so that they might recall them easily during *meditatio*.⁷⁹ As the *Rule* dictates, even meals were eaten in tandem to devotional recitation: “Mensis fratrum lectio deesse non debet” (At the meals there should not fail to be reading).⁸⁰ A monk was thus chosen to read during mealtimes while his audience remained silent as they listened and contemplated each text.⁸¹

⁷⁸ David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 940-1216* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 4.

⁷⁹ On the practice of reading aloud during meal-times, see further: Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 1982), 74-75; Seth Lerer, *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 8-9.

⁸⁰ Benedict, *Rule*, chap. 38; p. 93.

⁸¹ Benedict, *Rule*, chap. 38, p. 94. Earlier in the 7th century, Isidore of Seville laid out in detail how the *lector* should be chosen: “Qui autem ad huiusmodi provehitur gradum, iste erit doctrina et libris imbutus, sensuumque ac verborum scientia perornatus, ita ut in distinctionibus sententiarum intelligat ubi finiatur junctura, ubi adhuc pendet oratio, ubi sententia extrema claudatur. Sicque expeditus vim pronuntiationis tenebit, ut ad intellectum omnium mentes sensusque promoveat, discernendo genera pronuntiationum, atque exprimendo sententiarum proprios affectus, modo indicantis voce, modo dolentis, modo increpantis, modo exhortantis, sive his similia secundum genera propriae pronuntiationis” (Whosoever is to be promoted to a rank of this kind shall be deeply versed in doctrine and books, and thoroughly adorned with the knowledge of meaning and words, so that in the analysis of *sententiae* he may understand where the grammatical boundaries occur: where the utterance continues, where the sentence concludes. In this way, he will control the technique of oral delivery without impediment, in order that he

As Paul Saenger has argued, the Benedictine reform encouraged the dissemination of private prayers (exemplified in the *Adoro te*) that later became popular texts for silent devotion.⁸² Among the guides for monks, the *Regularis Concordia* and the *Rule of St. Benedict* have the most explicit rules for private reading. According to Michael Lapidge, a large section of the Anglo-Saxon monastic library would have been earmarked for private reading because the *Rule* required that each monk read a book of the Bible during Lent.⁸³ The *Regularis Concordia* states that an individual might take a book into his cell so that he could read the book before he slept—to, as the rule book states, keep his hands busy and his mind centered on spiritual matters. While the usage or purpose of many Old English manuscripts remains shrouded in mystery, some are thought to have been used specifically for private reading rather than for communal prayer or teaching.⁸⁴ In daily practice, the *Regularis Concordia* calls for sacred reading to occur after early

may move the minds and feelings of all to understand, by distinguishing between the kinds of delivery, and by expressing the feelings (*affectus*) of the *sententia*: now by the tone of one expounding, now in the manner of one who is suffering, now in the manner of one who is chiding, now in the manner of one who is exhorting or by those according to the kinds of appropriate delivery). Isidore of Seville, *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, II.xi.2. Cited from: M.B. Parkes, “Rædan, areccan, smeagan: How the Anglo-Saxons Read,” *Anglo-Saxon England*, Vol. 26, Michael Lapidge, Malcolm Godden, Simon Keynes, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7. See Parkes further for a discussion of how Anglo-Saxons adhere to the rhetorical principles of *lectio*, *emendatio*, *enarratio*, and *iudicium*.

⁸² Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 202.

⁸³ See further: Michael Lapidge, “Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England,” in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, Michael Lapidge, Helmut Gneuss, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 35.

⁸⁴ In Chapter Two, for example, the manuscripts that contain Prudentius’ *Psychomachia* are commonly thought to be ‘library books’ that young monks would use to both learn Latin and devote themselves to prayer. Michael Lapidge, “The Study of Latin Texts in late Anglo-Saxon England: the Evidence of Latin Glosses,” in *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. Nicholas Brooks (Leicester, 1982), pp. 99-140. In Chapter Three and Four, both *Vercelli Homily IV* and *The Dream of the Rood* are contained within Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare MS CXVII. Commonly known as the Vercelli Book, this miscellany was compiled in England in the late tenth century, and discovered in 1822 in Italy. Although it has long been debated how the Vercelli Book was used, it is now widely accepted in scholarship that the

morning Office recitations, and a more extensive period of reading during the late morning.⁸⁵

After laying out the overall scheduling of prayers, the text states: “Ceteris enim horis secundum regulae praeceptum, quia tempus lectionis est, lectioni tantummodo vacantes, silentium diligenti cura in claustro custodiant” (xxxiii) (The remaining hours of the day are times for reading; and therefore, in accordance with the ordinance of the Rule, the brethren shall spend them in reading only, keeping strict silence in the cloister).⁸⁶ In *Education and Culture*, Pierre Riché has argued that in Benedictine monastic communities, “more than twenty hours a week were spent reading.”⁸⁷ And as D.K. Smith has suggested, this reading was not necessarily confined to the Bible, but could also include things like the liturgy, saints’ lives, grammars, and other pedagogical texts.⁸⁸

What is most important for the purposes of this study is that medieval audiences did indeed have a conception of reading privately as a necessary facet of devotional practice. As texts like the *Regularis Concordia* imply, monks had the opportunity throughout the day to

manuscript was created as a private reader for individuals to use in their daily devotion. For a thorough discussion of the Vercelli Book’s audience, purpose, and make-up, see: Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies*, 29-62. For a discussion of the manuscript as a private reader, see: Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), 118. Milton Gatch develops Sisam’s theory and concludes that the emphasis on eschatological themes “must have been intended for penitential reading in a monastic community.” See further: Milton Gatch, “Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies,” *Traditio* 21 (1965), 146.

⁸⁵ Benedict, *Regula* xlvi–xlix, *CSEL* 75, 114-121. See further: Paul Ramsey, *Old English Biblical Verse: Studies in Genesis, Exodus, and Daniel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73-76. See also: K.S. Frank, “Lesen, Schreiben, und Bücher im frühen Mönchtum,” *Schriftlichkeit im Frühen Mittelalter*, Ursula Schaefer (Tübingen, 1993), 6-18.

⁸⁶ Thomas Symons, *Regularis Concordia Anglica nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque* (London: 1953), xxxiii.

⁸⁷ Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West: From the Sixth to the Eighth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 118.

⁸⁸ D.K. Smith, “Humor in Hiding: Laughter Between the Sheets in the Exeter Book Riddles,” in *Humour in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Jonathan Wilcox (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), 79-98, at 83-85. See also: Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture*, 118-119. For more on reading practice during the Benedictine Reform, see: David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 3-15; Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 202-205.

engage in *lectio divina*, as well as in *lectio spiritualis*, or “thinking spiritually.”⁸⁹ Brian Stock describes the differences between these two practices in his work on Augustine and self-knowledge:

“In *lectio divina* the centralizing element in the contemplative process was the biblical text itself. This was the constant reference point for the author’s reflections and therefore for his or her conception of literary identity. In *lectio spiritualis*, the centralizing element was the thinking subject, who was the source of the continuity of the contemplative process and therefore the source of literary identity.”⁹⁰

In other words, as medieval readers moved between these processes, the information they gathered from specific texts during *lectio divina* would influence how they meditated during *lectio spiritualis*. As Stock observes, *lectio spiritualis* occurred “on the frontier between reading, interior reflection, and a number of other devotional activities.”⁹¹ Whereas *lectio divina* focused on content from specific texts, medieval devotees who practiced *lectio spiritualis* engaged in self-exploration in which words, images, and ideas came together after the reader had gathered the necessary information from texts.⁹² This was a practice that encouraged creative expression, the experience of emotion, and most of all, for individuals to delve deeply into the *homo interior* (inner-self) as part of their spiritual lives.⁹³

Outline of the Project by Chapter:

As this concept of *lectio spiritualis* demonstrates, one of the central tenants of devotion in the Middle Ages is to absorb what is read and direct those teachings inwards to construct the self. Gregory, who is cited as a source and model in the *Soliloquies*’ Preface, spells out this notion in his *Moralia in Job*: “In nobismetipsis namque debemus transformare quod legimus, ut cum per

⁸⁹ Brian Stock, *After Augustine*, 108.

⁹⁰ Brian Stock, *After Augustine*, 108.

⁹¹ Brian Stock, *After Augustine*, 106.

⁹² Brian Stock, *After Augustine*, 106-107.

⁹³ Brian Stock, *After Augustine*, 107.

auditum se animus excitat, ad operandum quod audierit vita concurrat” (And so we must transform that which we read into our very selves, so that when the mind is enlivened by what it hears, it may rush to perform in life what it has heard).⁹⁴ Here Gregory emphasizes that we are what we read, so that each person’s word- and text-hoard is a meticulously crafted extension of their very self. Medieval readers were accordingly tasked with gathering a range of appropriate texts for their own devotional practice. It stands to reason that they would choose dynamic texts like the case studies that follow, which all produce affective emotional responses and script a turn inwards towards the inner-self and God.

In Chapter One, titled “*Be his Agnum Ingeþance*: Dialogue and Devotional Scripting in King Alfred’s Soliloquies,” I begin the dissertation by examining Augustine’s shift from interpersonal dialogue to interiority and silent reading. His call to turn inward and away from the public, which occurs after he wrote the Cassiciacum dialogues, was one of the primary sources for medieval readers regarding the search for wisdom and self-knowledge. This chapter’s focus is Augustine’s use of the soliloquy form and King Alfred’s subsequent translation of that form into Old English. The two texts respectively feature a Platonic internal dialogue between Ratio and Augustine, and the character *Agustinus* and his own *Gesceadwisnes* (Wisdom) in which these agents together debate the nature of God and the human soul. Although scholars remain divided over the *Soliloquies*’ place within Alfred’s translation program, I suggest that the text’s appeal lay in the soliloquy form, which allows the reader to experience the dramatic interaction between two characters. *Soliloquy*, from the Latin *solus* (only) and *loquor* (I speak), is today known as a device in drama when a character speaks to himself alone. Indeed, when outlining the soliloquy in early modern plays, Matthew Arnold would poignantly describe it as a “dialogue of

⁹⁴ Gregory, *Moralia in Job*, I.33, *CCSL*, I.43, ll. 16-18.

the mind with the self.”⁹⁵ He relates his own thoughts and feelings while also sharing them with the audience, performing a type of simultaneously un-spoken and spoken self-reflection. Although the term soliloquy is often distinct from monologues in which a character more consciously addresses an audience, characters in many modern dramas and prose texts soliloquize in front of others by guarding their speech or pretending to be alone.

One of the most problematic elements of the soliloquy form is that it has roots within both the private and public realm. In other words, though soliloquists usually speak alone to themselves and though their focus may be turned inward, they are nevertheless being observed and their speeches witnessed by an audience—whether that audience is present at the time of the speech or reading it after the fact. The OE version of the *Soliloquies* emphasizes the public nature of the soliloquy form, despite its setting within the individual mind. By reworking and publishing his OE translation, Alfred’s uses the private soliloquy form to provide a devotional script for a wider Anglo-Saxon audience—while Augustine’s Ratio cautions him to keep their conversation as private as possible, Alfred’s Gesceadwisnes (Reason) urges Agustinus to draw in members of his community. In Alfred’s campaign to expand literacy in Britain, the *Soliloquies* provides an ideal vehicle for self-guided education. Because the dialogue’s interlocutors are marked only by the terms *ic* (I) and *heo* (she, referring to Gesceadwisnes), medieval readers are encouraged to substitute themselves for *Agustinus*—they must ask themselves *Gesceadwisnes*’ questions, study *Agustinus*’ responses, and compare his answers with their own interpretations. In so doing, they are encouraged to use the dialogue’s template to stage theological debates with their own *Gesceadwisnes*, thereby gaining the freedom to ask difficult questions and reason through doubt within the safety of their own minds.

⁹⁵ Alex Newell. “Images of the Mind.” *The Soliloquies in Hamlet: The Structural Design* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1991), 26-7.

My second chapter, titled “Mind Games: Performing Virtue and Vice in the Old English Glossed *Psychomachia*,” moves away from person deixis and instead focuses on the use of ekphrasis as a mechanism to guide readers to wisdom. While the *Soliloquies* largely rely on dialogue to instruct readers, the OE glossed *Psychomachia* depends on the interaction between narrative and manuscript illumination to facilitate active reading. The poem survives in ten manuscripts (four of them illustrated) that were either owned or created in Anglo-Saxon England, illustrating a series of battles between personified Virtues and Vices, replete with images of dismemberment, strangulation, and agonizing death. Engaging with Jessica Brantley’s work on image-texts and private reading, I argue that these battles are not simple grotesquerie, but rather function as eye-catching foci that are intended to lead medieval readers through the narrative. The illuminations within the poem make the text come alive by joining visual and verbal registers, allowing readers to visualize each scene clearly within the mind. As medieval readers work through the poem, moving between the bloody descriptions and the corresponding illustrations, they would have been pulled into the poem’s world just as they imagine themselves battling and subsequently destroying the Vices within themselves. The poet explicitly instructs his readers to embed the text’s graphic imagery within their minds when he states, “vincendi praesens ratio est, si comminus ipsas Virtutem facies et conluctantia contra viribus infestis liceat portenta notare” (ll. 18-20) (The way for victory is before our eyes if we take in at close quarters the very features of the Virtues, and the monsters that close with them in deadly struggle).⁹⁶ These illuminations are physically present on the page and situated before readers’ eyes, which in turn mirrors the way readers internalize the poetic narrative and replay it before their *sensus animis* (senses of the mind). By engaging in both physical and spiritual sight, readers acquire the

⁹⁶ Prudentius, *Psychomachia*. ed. and trans. H.J. Thomson, *Loeb Classical Library 387, Prudentius Volume I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949).

necessary knowledge to stage their very own battles against the Vices that reside within themselves. In this way, I argue that the poem functions as a template for devotional self-care that remains present as long as readers commit the gory battle images to memory.

As I turn from poetry and back to prose in my third chapter, “Dramatizing Devotion in *Vercelli Homily IV*,” I combine the foci of the previous two chapters by examining the combination of visceral imagery and internal dialogue in *Vercelli Homily IV*. This prose homily imagines the spectacle of Doomsday by depicting a damned soul (gendered feminine) awaiting God’s judgment—the soul both laments her eternal fate and lambasts her decomposing, grave-bound body (gendered masculine) for his sins on earth. When the soul engages in direct speech, the homilist uses referential pronouns to center the soul as *ic* (the speaker) and the body as *pu* (the interlocutor and addressee). Like Alfred’s *Soliloquies*, the alternation between first and second person in *Vercelli IV* creates a parallel *ic* and *pu* structure, which in turn offers readers these respective roles in dialogue. The soul and body function as protagonist and antagonist, effectively allowing readers to see the narrative as a proto-morality play designed to scare its participants into repentance. In addition, the communal *we* that the homilist employs throughout his exhortatory passages connects each reader back to his or her larger Christian community. Readers familiar with the homily’s penitential subject matter and eschatological framework are asked to link this narrative with their experience of communal prayer, confession, and penance as a reminder to constantly pursue eternal salvation. They are then able to use this scripted dialogue, in addition to the homilist’s gruesome descriptions of the damned body rotting in the grave, to both envision and ruminate on their own future moment of Judgment. It is ultimately this multivalent transaction between the text’s dialogue, the gruesome imagery, and the reader that makes *Vercelli IV* a devotionally productive script.

Just as *Vercelli IV* combines inner-dialogue and the image of the tortured body to aid reflection, my fourth chapter, “*Mycel on Mode: Interior and Exterior Devotion in The Dream of the Rood*,” studies how the *Dream* combines dialogue, vivid imagery, and homiletic exhortation to promote meditation on the Crucifixion—readers of this OE poem move from the dreamer’s vision of the blood-soaked Cross, to the Cross’s first-person retelling of the Crucifixion, to the final exhortation for readers to “þas gesyhðe secge mannum” (recite this vision for men). While the text is simple in its didactic goal to bring the dreamer and the reader to salvation, its framing of the Cross’ retelling that is set within a larger dream vision produces competing narratorial perspectives. The Cross’s vision, filled as it is with precise detail and description, invites readers to visualize and re-enact the Crucifixion scene within their own minds—a phenomenon that is well attested in late medieval lyric poetry such as the 13th century *Wohunge of ure Laured*. In visualizing the Rood within the *Dream*, the reader must stand in for the unnamed dreamer (the *ic*), who is witness to Christ’s death. The act of re-reading the poem and envisioning the dreamer’s vision in turn requires readers to become part of a discursive devotional loop that demands continual prayer, meditation, and rumination from each devotee. It is only through this devotional loop that readers can attain the dreamer’s final desire to “secan þone sigebeam” (see the victory-tree) and to become “mycel on mode” (great in spirit). The *Dream* epitomizes the partnership of image and dialogue that I address throughout my dissertation, and also best illustrates the movement between communal and individual devotion that occurs throughout these early medieval texts. The *Dream* comes full circle from my first chapter, in which I introduced how Late Antique conceptions of communal devotion and private meditative reading became infused into Anglo-Saxon texts and translations. Like Alfred’s translation, which teeters between script for private devotion and script for interacting with the community, the *Dream*

chapter again illustrates how Anglo-Saxons navigate the necessity of private devotion and inner reflection with civic duty, or the call to join with the Christian community. As we see in the *Dream* and my other case studies, reading is ultimately an active rather than a static exercise. Each text encourages medieval readers to perform prayer, penitence, and exegesis by inviting them to re-enact dialogue, crucifixion, and bone-crunching battles within their own minds. This process thus turns the reader's encounter with the silent page into a dynamic and devotionally productive inner performance.

In the chapters that follow, I argue that enlivening the mind for early medieval readers (as Gregory advises) means stepping into devotional narratives and re-imagining scenes within the mind. As we saw first in Margaret Cavendish's concept of inner-theater, this interactive mode of reading and thinking is a locus of dramatic possibility. Cavendish's metaphor of the mind-stage underscores that the creative possibilities for envisioning dialogue and dramatic spectacle are endless. If we think about early medieval poetry and prose as spiritual exercises, the texts become non-static objects—perhaps we could call them springboards that allow readers to safely visualize and work through doctrinal tangles. While the texts within this dissertation might act as initial templates for reflecting on each narrative, there would be nothing stopping medieval readers from adding to or focusing their attention on a specific part of the text they find productive or engaging. This form of interactivity is ultimately essential for the following devotional texts, whose didactic goal is to grab readers' attention, present them with a series of useful *cwidas* (sayings), and guide them to a greater understanding of God and the soul.

CHAPTER ONE:

Be his Agnum Ingeþance: Dialogue and Devotional Scripting in King Alfred's Soliloquies

King Alfred's Old English translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies*, as Malcolm Godden suggests, has traditionally been viewed as a bit of a mess.¹ During his reign, it is believed that Alfred translated texts like the *Soliloquies* as part of his program to carry out widespread education reform. According to Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, after defeating the Danes in 878, the king turned to the task of expanding literacy and creating a corpus of vernacular texts.² The *Preface* to the *Pastoral Care* accordingly the mission of his ambitious translation program was to make "sumæ bec ða ðe niedbeðearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiotonne" (5-6) (certain books which are the most necessary for all men to know) available to a wider audience.³ His sponsored program and his broad education reform brought into circulation Latin learning in history, philosophy, and theology that had hereto been inaccessible to his community.⁴ As Nicholas Howe suggests, Alfred recognized that the well-being of his nation depended on the creation of a sustainable education program and an inclusive vernacular textual community.⁵ The king therefore understood reading to be a central element of peaceful public life—it is only through reading and hearing texts read aloud that members of this Christian community could imitate

¹ Malcolm Godden, "Text and Eschatology in Book III of the Old English Soliloquies," *Anglia—Zeitschrift für englische Philologie*, Vol. 121, Issue 2 (2007): 177-209, at 177.

² Nicholas Howe, "The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Old English Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. R.M. Liuzza (New Haven: Yale University Press), 16. For an edition of Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, see: Alfred P. Smyth, *The Medieval Life of King Alfred the Great: A Translation and Commentary on the Text Attributed to Asser* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³ *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. Henry Sweet, 2 vols, *Early English Text Society* 45 and 50 (London: 1871, repr. 1958), 7. 6-8. See also: Janet Bately, "Alfred as Author and Translator," in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, eds. Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul Szarmach (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2015), 113-114.

⁴ Nicholas Howe, "Cultural Construction of Reading," 17.

⁵ Nicholas Howe, "Cultural Construction of Reading," 17.

virtue and shun wickedness, just as Bede urges them to do in his preface to the *Ecclesiastical History*.⁶

Although Alfred's versions of the *Consolatio* or the *Pastoral Care* have attracted vigorous scholarly attention, comparatively little work has been done on his translation of Augustine's *Soliloquia*.⁷ There is one complete early witness of the OE *Soliloquies*, which survives in the twelfth century London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A xv. In format and structure, the OE *Soliloquies* retains the dialogue format in which two characters engage in a debate to gain more knowledge of God and the soul. The Latin character Ratio from the *Soliloquia* is translated as Gesceadwisnes in the OE, meaning reason or wisdom, while the character Augustine is referred to simply as Agustinus. As the *Soliloquies* progresses, the OE translator increasingly veers off-topic from the Latin *Soliloquia*—Book I is accordingly a close translation and Book II has frequent additions that are original to the Old English. While Augustine never finished the *Soliloquia* after the first two books, the OE translator added a completely original Book III which focuses on the state of the soul after death.

While it is perhaps obvious why early medieval translators would have chosen to disseminate texts like the *Consolatio*, because of the text's immense popularity throughout the Middle Ages, the decision to pass on the unfinished, and largely unknown, *Soliloquia* remains unclear. In this following chapter, I first examine Augustine's definition of the soliloquy form in order to establish both how and why the text attained widespread popularity in the early Middle Ages, before turning to examine the structure of the OE *Soliloquies* more fully.⁸ Though the text

⁶ Nicholas Howe, "The Cultural Construction of Reading," 17.

⁷ For a detailed list of the scholarship surrounding the *Soliloquies*, see further: Paul Szarmach, "Augustine's *Soliloquia* in Old English," *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, eds. Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul Szarmach (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2015), 230.

⁸ For the remainder of the chapter, I will follow the convention set forth by Milton Gatch and call the Latin text *Soliloquia* and the OE translation *Soliloquies* for ease of reference. To avoid

still presents many interpretative difficulties for scholars, I argue that the choice to translate the *Soliloquia* lay in part within the nature of the soliloquy form itself—a mode of writing that follows an individual’s search for Truth via dramatized inner dialogue.⁹ As a dialogue, the Augustinian soliloquy offers the OE translator opportunities to capitalize on the dramatic interaction between two characters. It also enables the translator to explore and untangle difficult theological, social, and political concepts. And unlike the more public form of the Socratic dialogue, the soliloquy occurs entirely within the individual mind, allowing both the translator and his readers to privately work out these doctrinal tangles in their ‘inner chambers’ without fear or shame. In this way, it circumvents problems of reasoning and logic that can occur in interpersonal dialogues—specifically, when individuals are caught up in rhetoric for its own sake and when they are distracted from gaining wisdom. Both Augustine and the OE translator

unnecessary confusion, I also refer to the Latin *Soliloquia*’s characters as ‘Augustine’ and ‘Ratio’, while I use ‘Agustinus’ and ‘Gesceadwisnes’ for the characters in Alfred’s *Soliloquies*. For further reference, see: Milton Gatch, “King Alfred’s Version of Augustine’s *Soliloquia*: Some Suggestions on its Rationale and Unity,” *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, Paul Szarmach, ed. (Albany: 1986). For Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, I use: Augustine, *Soliloquies and the Immortality of the Soul*, G. Watson, trans. and ed. (Warminster, 1990). For another edition, see: Augustine, *Soliloquiorum Libri Duo; De Immortalitate Animae; De Quantitate Animae*, ed. Wolfgang Hörmann, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera*, CSEL 89 (Vienna, 1986). For Alfred’s version of the *Soliloquies*, I use: *King Alfred’s Version of St. Augustine’s Soliloquies*, Thomas A. Carnicelli, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969). In the Latin citations, I cite book and page numbers from Watson; in the OE citations, I cite page numbers from Carnicelli.

⁹ As I explain in detail in this chapter, I recognize that within the OE text’s many additions, the voice of ‘Alfred’ comes to alter and displace the Augustinian ‘I’. Naming Alfred as translator is a fraught decision, and I recognize that scholars remain uncertain as to whether Alfred participated in the creative undertaking of the translations that are attributed to him. Throughout this chapter, I will primarily call the *ic*-speaker “Agustinus”, while also acknowledging that Alfred’s persona as king both influences and directs the *ic*-speaker’s thoughts and dialogue. Using what we know of Alfred and his authority as king to interpret the *Soliloquies* is useful, but it can also, I believe, stymie the way we think about how the text approaches topics like devotion, kingship, and translation itself. In other words, if we rely solely on Alfred’s persona, we might miss the wider application of the *Soliloquies*’ dialogue and understanding of the ‘self’ as a devotional tool. This chapter is therefore a delicate balancing act of thinking about the *Soliloquies* understanding of ‘self’, juggling Alfred’s persona as king and devotee within the original additions to the text, and recognizing that the authorship of the OE *Soliloquies* remains open for interpretation.

recognize the possibilities of the soliloquy to effectively shape and develop personal devotional progress. By examining the differences between the *Soliloquia* and the *Soliloquies*, I suggest that the OE translator uses this form for its capacity to act as a devotional script for both author and reader—one which, through pointed questions, metaphors, and dramatic *figura*, guides individual readers to re-enact the dialogue upon their own mind-stage, and thereby gain a heightened understanding of their *ingeþance* (inner-consciousness).¹⁰

A crucial part of my argument is that the Alfredian “self” the translation constructs is a revision of the Augustinian self. In the Latin *Soliloquia*, Augustine clearly states that it is only by retreating into the self that individual devotees can learn more about God and the soul while on earth. It seems as though Augustine puts more emphasis on the individual will in obtaining wisdom than in his later works like the *Confessions*, which instead regard God’s grace as the primary means for gaining understanding. He accordingly forges ahead with Ratio as his guide in the *Soliloquia*, both withdrawing from the communal sphere and obtaining self-understanding through inner-dialogue without specifically relying on grace. In the OE *Soliloquies*, however, Alfred does not withdraw entirely from the communal sphere, even as he exhorts his audience to delve deeper into the *ingeþance* (inner-consciousness). After briefly laying out Alfred’s use of the soliloquy, I thus examine how this dramatic process of internalization is translated within the OE *Soliloquies*—specifically, how the translation uses rational dialogue to discuss faith, private devotion, and self-understanding.

¹⁰ In this work I am indebted to Sarah McNamer, who explores the idea of ‘devotional scripting’ in her study of affective piety, gender, and compassion in Middle English texts. McNamer argues for a ‘performative model of affect’ in which medieval texts cultivated intimate, affective responses in their readers and pushed them towards a compassionate meditative experience. See further: Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). For a more in-depth examination of her work, see my Introduction above.

Within the bounded space of the *ingebance* (inner-consciousness), the character Gesceadwisnes (Reason) promises that Agustinus will learn to “ongyte God and þe silfne” (70) (perceive God and the self) as long as he can interpret what his corporeal eyes perceive and what the eyes of the mind perceive.¹¹ In this way, the characters work through both theological and

¹¹ In his translation of the *Pastoral Care*, Alfred is concerned with the different strata that make up the human mind—both the surface of the mind and the hidden depths that are unknown. In Alfred’s translation of the *Consolatio*, Wisdom discusses the search for good and truth: “Swa hwa swa wille dioplice spirigan mid innewardan mode æfter ryhte, and nylle þæt hine ænig mon oððe ænig þing mage amerran, onginne þonne secan oninnan him selfum þæt he ær ymbuton hine sohte, and forlæte unnytte ymbhogan swa he swiðost mæge, and gegæderige to þam anum, and gesecge þonne his agnum mod þæt hit mæg findan oninnan him selfum ealle þa god þe hit ute secð. Þonne mæg he swiðe raþe ongitan eall þæt yfel and þæt unnet þæt he ær on his mode hæfde; swa sweotole swa ðu miht þa sunnan geseon, and þu ongitst þin agen ingebanc þæt hit bið micele beortre and leohtre þonne seo sunne” (35.2-11) (Whoever wishes to deeply chase after the truth of the inward mind and does not wish for any man or anything to move him, then he should begin to seek within himself that which he before sought outside of himself, and abandon useless external things as he is most able, and gather his own thoughts to himself and tell then his own mind that it might find within itself all of the good things that it sought on the outside. Then might he very swiftly see all the evil and all the uselessness that he had before in his mind; as clearly as you might see the sun, you perceive your own inner-consciousness, that is is much brighter and clearer than then sun). In this passage, the inner mind (*inneward mod*) is the space in which mental processes are carried out, including logic, reason, devotion, and memory. It is that which allows the individual to move reflexively from the outer to the inner realm where good resides. Wisdom states that this turn inward allows the individual to “gegæderige to þam anum,” in order to find the “ealle þa god” that was previously sought in things outside the mind. The *inneward mod* allows the individual to chase or track the truth—Alfred translates the Latin *vestigat* meaning to track or follow the tracks of an animal to *spirigan*, meaning to follow or to make a journey in search of something. See further: Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine, eds. and trans., *The Old English ‘Boethius’*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 35.2-11. As Carruthers notes in *The Book of Memory*, *vestigat* here seems to be used in the sense of tracking down memory because the recovery of truth is the recovery of prior memory (20). In the Latin meter, Wisdom sings of the knowledge that once “atra textit erroris nubes” is now re-discovered in the mind’s treasury. Alfred’s translation, on the other hand, focuses on how the mind had in the past been focused on useless ephemera rather than the mind’s truth. Most interestingly, perhaps, is Alfred’s switch from third to second person when Wisdom states, “þu ongitst þin agen ingebanc” or “you perceive your own inner mind.” By speaking directly to the *ic*-speaker, Wisdom again highlights the need for self-reflexivity during the search for truth. This pronoun switch also allows outside readers to be drawn into the narrative itself—rather than being kept at bay with the third person, Alfred’s use of the second person opens the narrative outward to include the *ic-speaker* and anyone who is reading and simultaneously re-enacting the text’s dialogue. Narratives that chronicle both self-meditation and discovery of the divine like the *Consolatio* or the *Soliloquies* are not vertical ascents—instead, they capture inward movement

social *questiones* in their inner-dialogue, from issues of corporeal and divine hierarchy, to issues of loyalty and duty, and the relationship between the mind, the soul, and body. Closely examining the dialogue between Gesceadwisnes (Reason) and Agustinus can shed light on how the OE dialogue understands the “self” in relation to body and soul, and also how the medieval reader is encouraged time and again to dive into the *ingebance* only to be pulled back into the communal world. While the OE translation seems to shift its focus from inner devotion back to the socio-political concerns of the material world, this chapter argues that the shift is more reciprocal or relational in nature—in other words, the OE translator strives to understand the *ingebance* by turning outward to the community, just as he strives to engage in meditation by first retreating into the self to seek wisdom.

This interior/exterior movement, as well as the “self” it helps to develop, can be found in what Ronald J. Ganze aptly calls the “fissures which emerge in the translation,” that consist of “places where the king creates space within Augustine’s text and fills the ‘holes’ with material from other sources or with his own words.”¹² In order to follow the trajectory between the inner and outer self, I primarily examine these fissures in the following sections of the *Soliloquies*: the Preface, in which the text is set up as a path or *weig* for both the translator and for medieval readers; the OE extended metaphors in Book I in which readers come to find that earthly and spiritual success are inseparable; and the structure of Book III in which Agustinus ultimately drops the dialogue form to unite both speakers into one voice. It is ultimately the cyclical relationship between inner and outer, private and public, that makes up the greatest difference

deep into the self. See further: Mary Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 20-22. For more analysis on this passage and Carruthers work, see further: Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame (2011), 170-174.

¹² R.J. Ganze, “The Individual in the Afterlife: Theological and Sociopolitical Concerns in King Alfred’s Translation of Augustine’s *Soliloquies*,” *Studia Neophilologica*, Vol. 83 (2011): 21-40, at 23.

between the Latin *Soliloquia* and Old English *Soliloquies*. While Augustine's *Soliloquia* focuses primarily on the turn inward, Alfred's equal emphasis on the *ingebance* and the social nature of the self is an addition that reflects the deep ties of kinship and community within early medieval society. This constant discursive looping between public and private, which is made possible by the lively dialogue between Agustinus and Gesceadwisnes, in turn provides medieval readers with a script for daily devotional practice—one that is contingent upon medieval readers acknowledging their bodies' place within the corporeal world and their souls' place within the spiritual world. In the following sections, I examine how dialogue and the soliloquy function within Augustine's *Soliloquia* before turning fully to the creation of an interior, individual self in the OE translation.

Augustine on Dialogue:

Philosophers in Antiquity placed great emphasis on dialogue as a vehicle for the search and communication of truth. Dialogues ask a great deal from participants—to listen attentively, to remember carefully, and to respond thoughtfully. In addition, they also require each participant to be intimately connected with the positions they take. For students, the challenge lies in maintaining a straight and logical path throughout the conversation with their teachers. Dialogue participants must work to articulate their thoughts while simultaneously overcoming the fear of embarrassment or shame that comes with expressing personal beliefs out loud. The first rule of the Socratic *elenchus* is that the participant must say exactly what he thinks.¹³ In Plato's *Gorgias*, for example, Socrates reprimands Callicles for lacking the courage to answer questions without hesitation—as Socrates argues, it is only by saying what he truly believes that

¹³ Kenneth Seeskin, *Dialogue and Discovery: A Study in Socratic Method* (New York: SUNY Press, 1987), 2.

Callicles could proceed with their discussion.¹⁴ Like those who came before him, Augustine utilizes dialogue because of its didactic potential. This form becomes a productive format for discussing epistemological problems pertaining to theology, literature, psychology, and philosophy—specifically, it allows him to discuss and work through difficult theories concerning gesture, mimesis, semiotics, ethics, and the human will.

During the period in which he wrote his Cassiciacum dialogues, Augustine was living a life of philosophical retirement in a villa near Milan, together with a group of companions, students, relatives, and his mother Monica. His early Cassiciacum texts all take the shape of formal dialogues, meshing with his program of education that requires students to successively proceed through the seven steps of the *disciplinae liberales*.¹⁵ Catherine Conybeare has recently argued that these dialogues are striking for their indeterminacy—she states, “again and again, through the course of these dialogues, Augustine seems to purposely be favoring flexibility, to be bringing into the foreground the indeterminate or the unanswerable.”¹⁶ This flexibility or indeterminacy in turn allows readers room to interact and engage with unanswered problems—to question the content and methodology of the dialogue’s argument. Augustine’s dialogues from this period all take a school-room tone, and through his clear didacticism, he becomes the leader of these discussions.

Whereas Platonic or Ciceronian dialogues most often feature educated participants, the figures within Augustine’s texts often diverge from such typical interlocutors. The dialogues

¹⁴ Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. Donald J. Zeyl (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 505-506. See further: Kenneth Seeskin, “Socratic Philosophy and the Dialogue Form,” 1-16.

¹⁵ Augustine, *De Ordine*. As Augustine stipulates in *De Ordine*, this program begins with grammar, rhetoric, dialectic and progresses to music, astronomy, geometry, and arithmetic. See further: Mark Vessey. *A Companion to Augustine*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012); Brian Stock. *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue: The Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁶ Catherine Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.

provide a synthesis of differing levels of education and modes of communication to provide a community of learners and scholars. His *Cassiciacum* texts integrate pupils, poets, lawyers, and simple believers to show that every individual has his own place within the greater Christian dialogue of faith. They follow the logic of the two students, Licentius and Trygentius, the ‘uneducated’ figures of Lartidianus and Rusticus, his son Adeodatus, and his mother Monica. Through these figures who are not (fully) classically trained within the *disciplinae liberales*, Augustine can point to human weaknesses and the limits of the human intellect—he can, in effect, stage manage them and thereby make it clear that every individual is able to gain insight into convention, and complex, theological concepts.

Still, Augustine makes very clear that simple belief and discourse on Christian teachings cannot in itself suffice for knowing the soul—rather, individuals must educate themselves and eventually turn inward to acquire a true knowledge of the self in order to attain an understanding of both God and truth. As Stock notices, despite the usefulness of the dialogic form, analyzing Augustine’s dialogues has been consistently problematic for scholars.¹⁷ These problems stem from the circuitous nature of the texts, or what Stock calls the ‘intellectual disorderliness’ that the texts create within the minds of those who follow their arguments.¹⁸ Rather than an inherent faultiness or large-scale failure of logic, the disorder or circuitry that Augustine introduces into his dialogues exposes the problems with the open-dialogue format.¹⁹ In his early text *Contra Academicos*, for example, Augustine and his students move forward in a tangential (disorderly) manner; his students jump through topics as they verbally discuss the relationship between

¹⁷ Brian Stock, “Introduction,” *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue: The Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

¹⁸ Brian Stock, *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue*, 3.

¹⁹ Brian Stock, *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue*, 3.

wisdom and happiness using the Socratic method.²⁰ In Book II, however, Augustine sets up a distinction between internal and external dialogue—while he advises students not to give up oral debates as a preparatory stage for contemplation, he also goes on to caution against joining in a debate for the sake of pride and verbal argumentation alone.

A theme begins to emerge in his accounts at Cassiciacum—namely, his concern for the ways in which philosophical discussions lead to inner dialogue or meditation. Stock notes that each member at Cassiciacum engaged in inner reflection that, when later shared among the group, strengthened oral debates.²¹ Augustine was nevertheless dissatisfied with this oral approach to philosophical study, which he deemed superficial because of its specific focus on elocution and its shallow concentration on the ‘fundamental questions’ concerning faith and the divine. It is possible to trace Augustine’s declining confidence in interpersonal dialogue as he moved closer toward the idea of inner dialogue and the soliloquy.²² The turn towards interiority in the *Soliloquia* seems to be a rhetorical strategy to persuade his students to abandon external concerns (like perfecting oral speeches and arguments) and to focus on their individual spiritual goals. In other words, he pushes his students to continually test themselves through internal, introspective conversation in order to enhance their spiritual and mental understanding.

Although he first introduces the dichotomy between inner and outer dialogue in his early texts like *Contra Academicos* and the *Soliloquia*, Augustine fully lays this problem out in Book IX of *De Trinitate*; he differentiates between the Logos, words that are spoken and fill a

²⁰ Augustine, *Contra Academicos* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017). See also: Augustine, *Against the Academics*, trans. John O’Meara (New York: Newman Press, 1951). For a discussion of Augustine’s *Contra Academicos*, dialogue, and the soliloquy form, see further: Brian Stock, *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue*, 18-50; Michele Malatesta, “St. Augustine’s Dialectic from the Modern Logical Standpoint. Logical Analysis of *Contra Academicos*,” *Metalogicon* 8 (1995): 91-120; Therese Fuhrer, “Conversationalist and Consultant: Augustine in Dialogue,” in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 271-283.

²¹ Brian Stock, *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue*, 42.

²² Brian Stock, *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue*, 42.

“determined space of time,” and words that are *verbum dicitur animo impressum*, or “impressed on our mind.”²³ He argues that words as signs are external manifestations of internal thoughts or desires. They are in essence a movement within the mind towards comprehension that is given a form or bodily sense when an individual speaks or writes. As Stock suggests, there is clearly a hierarchy between spoken words, interior words of thought, and the Logos.²⁴ Augustine accordingly concludes in *De Trinitate*:

“Proinde verbum quod foris sonat, signum est verbi quod intus lucet, cui magis verbi competit nomen. Nam illud quod profertur carnis ore, vox verbi est: verbumque et ipsum dicitur, propter illud a quo ut foris appareret assumptum est. Ita enim verbum nostrum vox quodam modo corporis fit, assumendo eam in qua manifestetur sensibus hominum; sicut Verbum Dei caro factum est, assumendo eam in qua et ipsum manifestaretur sensibus hominum.”²⁵

(Hence, the word which sounds without is a sign of the word that shines within, to which the name of word more properly belongs. For that which is produced by the mouth of the flesh is the sound of the word, and is itself also called the word, because that inner word assumed it in order that it might appear outwardly. For just as our word in some way becomes a bodily sound by assuming that in which it may be manifested to the senses of men, so the Word of God was made flesh by assuming that in which He might also be manifested to the senses of men).

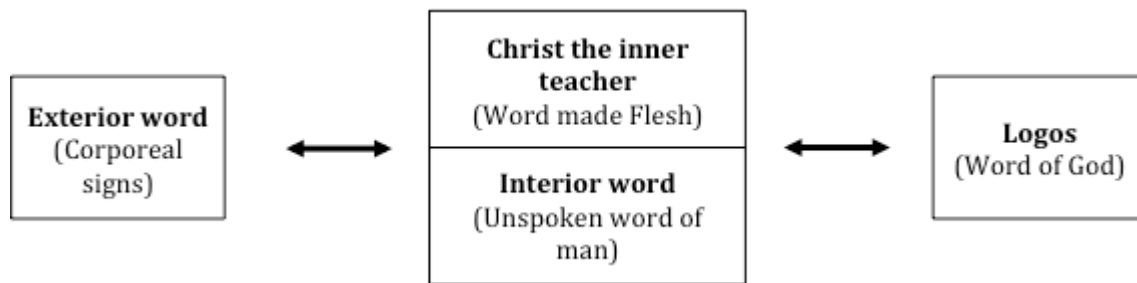
He relates the interior human word with the *Verbum Dei* (Word of God)—in order to understand the *Verbum Dei*, man must have an intuition of the inner spiritual word in its purest state. The intuition of this pure word occurs before sounds and images are attached and before it leaves the mind. The interplay between the interior and exterior *verbum* and the *Verbum Dei* is complicated but crucial. Figure 1.1 below explains the hierarchy of *verbi* as Augustine presents it in *De Trinitate*:

²³ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, CCSL, 50, IX.10.15.

²⁴ Brian Stock, *Augustine's Inner Dialogue*, 42-43.

²⁵ Augustine. *De Trinitate*. XV.20.11. CCSL, 50A. Stock, “Introduction,” 5-6.

Figure 1.1 Interplay of *verbi* as explained in *De Trinitate*.²⁶



Ultimately, the reason that exterior words are subordinate to interior words is linked to the Fall that bound us to the flesh. Our familiarity with corporeal signs makes rhetorical figura such as metaphors and symbols pedagogically productive—but the inherent inferiority or impurity of these metaphors means they cannot fully allow men to understand divine truths. For example, because it is easier for men to understand corporeal images, the inner sensory life is dominated by the language of vision in Augustine’s early works; knowing God is thus consistently described as a visionary experience of the self. Like the *homo exterior* that uses corporeal senses, he argues that the *homo interior* is also equipped with a sense capacity that can perceive God and truth. As Augustine’s prayer in the *Soliloquies* suggests, man’s first priority is to understand his self and God: “Deus semper idem, noverim me, noverim te. Oratum est” (II.68) (God, who is always the same. Let me know you as I know myself. This is my prayer.). For daily devotion, gaining access to Truth necessitates a turn from external dialogue and external signs to individual, private meditation. It is for this reason that Augustine drifts from open forums like

²⁶ I’ve taken Elena Lombardi’s original table from her study on Augustinian syntax and altered it to emphasize the relationship between Christ the Inner Teacher and the interior word. For Lombardi’s original table, see: Elena Lombardi, “Augustine: The Syntax of the Word,” *The Syntax of Desire: Language and Love in Augustine, the Modistae, Dante* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 61.

the ones in Cassiciacum and focuses instead on the soliloquy format and the inner self (*homo interior*). The soliloquy form allows him to continue these logical and theological debates internally after his oral conversations with friends and colleagues cease. In other words, internal dialogues allow individuals to examine, rehash, and replay knowledge (without shame) outside of the communal setting.

Private Dialogue, Public Script in Augustine's *Soliloquies*

While Augustine's *Soliloquia* remains unfinished, the text consists of a conversation between Augustine and his own Ratio in which they discuss the attainment of wisdom, knowledge of the self, and the relationship between soul and body. Augustine's identity or persona in this text is the product of continual self-reflection in which he attempts to discover an enduring expression of the divine image within himself. In the process of their conversation, Augustine gives himself and Ratio different individual traits. On one hand, Augustine plays the role of the tortured student—forced to prove himself to his mentor despite feeling bullied and confused. Ratio, on the other hand, largely plays the role of instructor or *magistra* that is consistent with classical Platonic dialogues. While she leads Augustine through a series of complex arguments, she questions her pupil mercilessly and is oftentimes misleading on purpose. Though context surrounding the beginning of their dialogue is sparse, it's important to note that the *Soliloquia* are not hypothetical dialogues between man and mind—Augustine positions these internal dialogues as actually occurring within his daily life. His discussion with Ratio thus ends when he becomes tired and wishes to return to less arduous daily activities.

His use of inner-dialogue to examine the self is not a new phenomenon, but rather a revision of Platonic ideology; this turning inward is a form of what Philip Cary calls “ethical

self-examination” for Plato in which the individual desires to know if his soul is well-ordered.²⁷ It is possible to see the order of the soul because thinking is essentially having a dialogue with oneself.²⁸ As an unspoken, private dialogue, the *Soliloquia* thus chronicles his struggles to both articulate and navigate Christian doctrine and Neoplatonic philosophy. The text paints a picture of a man at the moment of conversion, while his later works like the *Confessions* give us his recollections of that man after years of ecclesiastical experience.²⁹ The surviving text is a curious mixing of public and private, textual and oral, and monologue and dialogue—all binaries that speak to dramatic representation and serve to represent Augustine’s private personal testimony in his search from wisdom. Perhaps the soliloquy as a format remains problematic for modern scholars precisely because it does not seem to adhere to one form; it is at once a private meditation between Augustine and his own Ratio, as well as a dynamic script conceived to engage a future reading audience. The soliloquy that he presents oscillates between two interlocutory settings: that of a dialogue with fictitious characters, and that of the first-person monologue that can be compared with silent meditation.³⁰

²⁷ Philip Cary, *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11.

²⁸ In the *Sophist*, Plato states regarding thought and speech: “Well, then, thought and speech are the same; only the former, which is a silent inner conversation of the soul with itself, has been given the special name of thought. Is that not true?”

“οὐκοῦν διάνοια μὲν καὶ λόγος ταῦτόν: πλὴν ὁ μὲν ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς αὐτὴν διάλογος ἄνευ φωνῆς γιγνόμενος τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ ἡμῖν ἐπωνομάσθη, διάνοια” Plato, *Theaetetus, Sophist*, Vol. VII, trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press: 1921), Section 263e. See further: Phillip Cary, *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self*, 32.

²⁹ Phillip Cary, *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self*, 35-36.

³⁰ In Plato’s dialogue, we are faced with a genre that rests upon a polyphony linked to fictitious characters. In Augustine’s soliloquy form, he uses a dialogical schema but fictionalizes only one of his interlocutors. Augustine is present as both author and character immersed within his own dialogue. Frédéric Cosutta, “Controversies and Dialogic Intersubjectivity,” *Controversies and Subjectivity*, eds. Pierluigi Barrotta and Marcelo Dascal (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2005), 142.

As a hybrid form, Augustine is able to capitalize on the didactic elements of dialogue and the movement inward that occurs within monologues. It balances perfectly his individual desire to work out his own issues with Christian doctrine, while also supplying his readership with a template for their own struggle to find Truth. In the *Soliloquia*, the personal (perhaps autobiographical) dimension that we see in the later *Confessions* is alluded to only underneath the surface. Due to the non-narrative logic of the dialogue in the *Soliloquia*, the internal conversation between Augustine and Ratio only hints at a larger journey of life via the author's intellectual and devotional struggle to obtain Truth. Seth Lerer suggests that this turn inward from the voices of men to the inner voice (*homo interior*) is made more fully within the *Confessions*; the *Soliloquia* structure is thus thought to present his later opinions on the inner self in its nascent form.³¹

Even if we accept the *Soliloquia* as an early form of his *Confessions*, the text captures an important stage of evolution for Augustine, who fought to both overcome his own skepticism and link his Latin learning with his faith. Scholars often mistakenly equate the *Soliloquies* with his other dialogues, like *De Magistro* or *Contra Academicos*. Martin and Gaillard, for example, suggest: “there is no fundamental difference between this work and the other dialogues: Ratio addresses Augustine as he himself addresses his young disciple, so that these dialogues are soliloquies too.”³² In his investigation of Boethius' *Consolation*, Lerer groups the *Soliloquia* and *De Magistro* together for their adherence to Ciceronian and Platonic dialogue via their strict articulation of master and student.³³ While the text does absolutely draw on Platonic methodology, the Augustinian soliloquy should not be wholly assimilated into his other

³¹ Seth Lerer, *Boethius and Dialogue: Literary Method in The Consolation of Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 51; 90; 152.

³² Martin and Gaillard, *Les Genres Littéraires à Rome* (Paris: Nathan Scodel, 1990), 243. Cf, Frédéric Cosutta, “Controversies and Dialogic Intersubjectivity,” 142.

³³ Seth Lerer, *Boethius and Dialogue*, 51-52.

dialogues. Rather than a mirror image of his early Socratic dialogues, the *Soliloquia* exemplifies a new genre that he created specifically to organize and understand his own mind. Another important difference between the *Soliloquia* and Augustine's other Cassiciacum dialogues is that he lets the book's arguments develop naturally as in a conversation—they are unhindered and without the usual preface, context, digressions, and primary definitions.

In taking a closer look at the relationship between Augustine and Ratio, we see moments when the master/student roles break down to again reveal one cohesive mind/soul. Although Augustine externalizes Ratio to make his dialogue public, Ratio still resides within Augustine's inner self. While she may be a fictionalizing of Augustine's Ratio, these are not two distinct characters—they are rather two face(t)s of one self. At the end of Book I, for example, Ratio asks Augustine to review their reasoning to make sure their concessions were appropriate. Augustine replies, "Habeo gratiam et ista mecum atque adeo tecum, quando in silentio sumus, diligenter cauteque tractabo, si nullae se tenebrae inmittant suamque etiam..." (I.28) (I am grateful and give you thanks; and in the silence I will diligently and cautiously review these things with myself, and with you, provided no shadows reappear...). Augustine here promises to review their findings when they are both in silence, highlighting the fact that Ratio never leaves his mind even if their primary conversation has ceased. This review will happen outside the confines of the text in a space to which the reader is not made privy. It points to an external world beyond the space of the text's dialogue in which Augustine and Ratio continue their discussions. Perhaps most importantly, it highlights the way in which individual introspection is never completed for those who seek knowledge of God. Despite his long and mentally exhausting discussion with Ratio, Augustine continues his work after-hours, so to speak, in the hopes that his repeated

efforts can fully dispel the *tenebrae* (shadows) of sin, forgetfulness, and ignorance that come with being human.

Defining the ‘soliloquy’:

In Book II, Ratio more explicitly spells out the driving force behind their philosophical and theological labor. She scolds Augustine:

“Ridiculum est, si te pudet, quasi non ob idipsum elegerimus huiusmodi sermoncinationes; quae, quoniam cum solis nobis loquimur, Soliloquia vocari atque inscribi volo, novo quidem et fortasse duro nomine, sed ad rem demonstrandam satis idoneo. Cum enim neque melius quaeri veritas possit quam interrogando et respondendo et vix quisquam inveniatur, quem non pudeat convinci disputantem, eoque paene semper eveniat, ut rem bene inductam ad discutiendum inconditus pervicaciae clamor explodat, etiam cum laceratione animarum plerumque dissimulata, interdum et aperta, pacatissime, ut opinor, et commodissime placuita meipso interrogatum mihi respondeantem deo adiuvante verum quaerere. Quare nihil est quod vereare, sicubi temeret te inligasti, redire atque resolvere; aliter hinc enim evadi non potest.” (2.17.14)

(It is absurd for you to be ashamed, for we have provided for such an event by our choice of this method of discussion, which, because we speak to ourselves alone, I wish to have designated and written down as Soliloquies — certainly a new, and perhaps, callous name, but quite suitable to the matter under discussion. For, while Truth cannot be better investigated than by question and answer, scarce a person can be found who is not mortified at being vanquished in argument, and from this fact it almost invariably happens that, when the debate is well under way, some explosion of perversity bursts out resulting in wounded feelings, often concealed, but sometimes apparent; so that I think it tends most to peace and is best suited to the search after Truth that, God helping, I myself reply to questions put by myself. Therefore there is no need that we should fear to turn back and reconsider, if at any time from lack of deliberation you should have tangled yourself up; for otherwise there is no way out).

The passage above reveals several important facets about the *Soliloquia* itself—most notably, perhaps, is that Augustine viewed the text as an innovative mode of writing that required an original name.³⁴ As Ratio notes, although the term *soliloquy* may be uncultivated (he calls it ‘duro’ or rough), it is intended to describe the spiritual search for Truth that is being dramatized

³⁴ Michael Foley, “A Spectacle to the World: The Theatrical Meaning of St. Augustine’s *Soliloquies*,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2. (2014): 253.

within the dialogue.³⁵ Augustine's definition of 'soliloquy' allows him to lay out two sides of the dilemma concerning interpersonal dialogues. Ratio reprimands Augustine for feeling ashamed of speaking his mind during their 'private' conversation—and yet, she admits that it is best for him to discover 'truth' using question-and-answer dialogues even though he might be afraid of looking foolish and losing an argument. The search for truth is best conducted communally despite the dangers and fears that accompany interpersonal dialogue—as Ratio suggests, however, shame and embarrassment often trump mankind's desire for knowledge.

Building on this idea, Michael Foley aptly suggests, “our personal eagerness to come off well in the drama of our lives, to be good performers adored and esteemed by a real or imagined audience, overshadows our curiosity about what is on the other side of the curtain.”³⁶ As we see in the above quotation, the soliloquy's movement from public address to an interior dialogue (implemented to sidestep the ubiquitous sin of pride) is key for Augustine's search for truth. And yet, as Foley notes, his continued shame is perhaps proof that this mode of writing is not entirely successful.³⁷ In other words, like the communal dialogues in *De Magistro* or *De Ordine*, internal dialogues in the *Soliloquia* also fail to provide an unobstructed path to enlightenment. Both of these problems are nevertheless based on man's inability to perceive truth while still on earth rather than an issue with the form itself. While the soliloquy is not a cure-all, it nevertheless drives Augustine to rehearse and rehash important moral *quaestiones*.³⁸ This description holds true for Augustine as well, for he explicitly seeks to know his individual rather than his communal self in the *Soliloquia*. While he discusses friendship, personal relationships, and communal learning, he repeatedly brings his argument back to the individual soul and God as the

³⁵ Michael Foley, “A Spectacle to the World,” 253.

³⁶ Michael Foley, “A Spectacle to the World,” 252.

³⁷ Michael Foley, “A Spectacle to the World,” 256-257.

³⁸ Alex Newell, “Images of the Mind,” *The Soliloquies in Hamlet: The Structural Design* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1991), 26-27.

root of all love. His soliloquy form creates an ideal space in which the mind may disentangle knots and coils of particularly difficult arguments. And this can all be done in the mind without being heckled or hissed at (*explodat*).³⁹

At the very beginning of Book I, Ratio suggests, “Nec modo cures invitationem turbae legentium; paucis ista sat erunt civibus tuis” (I.22) (“Do not make any effort to attract a crowd of readers; a few of your own townsmen will suffice). In this way, Augustine makes a show of superficially limiting the *Soliloquia*’s reach; the text becomes a means of private meditation that should not be distributed widely. Despite Ratio’s advice to keep his audience exclusive, Augustine presumably imagined a larger readership than the few that followed him to Cassiciacum—particularly, an audience that comes into focus through reading. The key here is his push toward inward rather than outward life. For Augustine, acquiring wisdom is the greatest task for mankind, which can only be achieved through a greater knowledge and understanding of the self. While friends and community can help and support an individual in this task (and while Augustine believes men have a responsibility to educate one another), individuals must ultimately retreat into their own minds and follow Christ the Inner Teacher. This need for interiority and private meditation that I have outlined above allows us to better examine the Old English translation and gauge how community fits into its devotional program. In the sections that follow, I first provide brief context for Alfred’s role as author and translator before investigating the function and the mechanism of inner-dialogue within the translation.

Alfred as Author:

Because this study is primarily concerned with the development of the individual *ingebance* (inner-consciousness) through the use of dialogue, it is first necessary to discuss what

³⁹ Michael Foley, “A Spectacle to the World,” 252.

role, if any, Alfred played in authoring and translating the texts that are attributed to him.⁴⁰ The question remains for scholars whether the authorial voice (the *ic*) in the translations is truly Alfred's voice or whether the "self" in texts like the *Consolatio* and the *Soliloquies* is a curated creation. Among the translations attributed to Alfred, only the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies* identify him as the author. The Preface to the *Pastoral Care* begins with the statement, "Alfred kynning hateð gretan Wærferð biscep his wordum lufllice ond freondlice" (2) (King Alfred bids bishop Wærferth to be greeted with loving and friendly words), before Alfred discusses in the first person his plan to enact education reform.⁴¹ While the Preface of the *Soliloquies* does not disclose his authorial identity, the brief explicit at the end of Book III states, "Hær endiað þa cwidas þe Ælfred kining alæs of þære bec þe we hatað on Ledene [de videndo deo]" (97) (Here ends the sayings of King Alfred that he excerpted from the book we call *De Videndo Deo* in Latin).⁴² In the Preface to the OE version of Gregory's *Dialogues*, Alfred is also called the text's patron even though Bishop Wærferth completed the translation.⁴³

⁴⁰ Historically, scholars have argued about the positioning of seven texts in Alfred's translation program—Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Augustine's *Soliloquia*, the first fifty *Psalms*, Gregory's *Liber Regulae Pastoralis* and *Dialogi*, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and Orosius' *Historiae Adversus Paganos*. Scholarship now mostly agrees that only the first four of these books can be reliably attributed to Alfred himself or the 'Alfredian circle'. See further: R.J. Ganze, "The Individual in the Afterlife: Theological and Sociopolitical Concerns in King Alfred's Translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies*," 21-40, at 22.

⁴¹ *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. Henry Sweet, *Early English Text Society*, 45 and 50 (London: 1871).

⁴² For an in-depth bibliography on scholarship up until 1996, see further: Greg Waite, *Old English Prose Translations of King Alfred's Reign, Annotated Bibliographies of Old and Middle English Literature*, 6 (Cambridge: 2000). For a briefer introduction to the scholarship, see: Janet Bately, "The Alfredian Canon Revisited: One Hundred Years On," *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 107–120, and Rohini Jayatilaka, "King Alfred and his Circle," *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 1, c.400–1100 (Cambridge: 2012), 670–678. A more detailed discussion of the critical background and more extensive analysis of the translations can be found in Michael Treschow, Paramjit Gill, and Tim B. Swartz, "King Alfred's Scholarly Writings and the Authorship of the First Fifty Prose Psalms," *Heroic Age* 12 (2009). A discussion of their statistical methodology can be found in: Paramjit S. Gill, Tim B. Swartz, and Michael Treschow,

The question of authorship and attribution remain a hotly debated topic.⁴⁴ Scholars such as Patrick Wormald have traditionally argued that there is “no good reason to doubt that the four books that stand in name, plus one other, were in a real sense composed by [Alfred].”⁴⁵ More recent scholarship, however, has drifted away from attributing the translations directly to Alfred; instead, there has been a push towards thinking about Alfred’s role as supervisor, commissioner, or even a member in a group of translators.⁴⁶ David Pratt, for example, examines how a group of

“A Stylometric Analysis of King Alfred’s Literary Works,” *Journal of Applied Statistics* 34 (2007): 1251-58. The following are recent influential studies: Janet Bately, “Lexical Evidence for the Authorship of the Prose Psalms in the Paris Psalter,” *ASE* 10 (1982): 69-95; Milton Gatch, “King Alfred’s Version of Augustine’s *Soliloquia*: Some Suggestions on its Rationale and Unity,” *Studies in Early Old English Prose* (Albany: State University of NY Press, 1986); Scott DeGregorio, “Texts, topoi, and the self: a reading of Alfredian Spirituality,” *Early Medieval Europe*, Vol. 13, No. 1. (2005): 79-96; Paul Szarmach, “Augustine’s *Soliloquia* in Old English,” *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, eds. Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul Szarmach (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2015). Malcolm Godden, “Text and Eschatology in Book III of the Old English *Soliloquies*,” *Anglia*, 121 (2003): 79-188.

⁴³ See further: Bischof Wærferths von Worcester, Übersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen, ed. Hans Hecht (Leipzig: 1900–7, repr. Darmstadt, 1965).

⁴⁴ The following is a select list of scholarship that considers Alfred’s authorship: R.J. Ganze, “The Individual in the Afterlife: Theological and Sociopolitical Concerns in King Alfred’s Translation of Augustine’s *Soliloquies*,” *Studia Neophilologica*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (2011): 21-40. Janet Bately, “Alfred as Author and Translator,” 113-142. See also: Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” 12-21; Janet Bately, “Lexical Evidence for the authorship of the prose Psalms in the Paris Psalter,” 69-80; Dorothy Whitelock, “The Prose of Alfred’s Reign,” in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. Eric Gerald Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), 67-103; Allen J. Frantzen, *King Alfred* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 68-69; Miranda Wilcox, “Alfred’s Epistemological Metaphors: *eagan modes* and *scip modes*,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 35 (2006): 179-217.

⁴⁵ See further: Patrick Wormald, “Alfred the Great,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 60, eds. H.C. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1.719.

⁴⁶ Scholars have looked to authors like Asser and William of Malmesbury to corroborate the argument for a group of translators. In his *Life of King Alfred*, for example, Asser begins his account by referencing scholars within the royal court who helped Alfred with his work, including: Grimbold, Wærferth, Æthelstan, and Plegmund of Canterbury. See further: Alfred P. Smyth, *The Medieval Life of King Alfred the Great*: 36-45; 94-95. In his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, William of Malmesbury likewise states: “Nichil in ista uel aliis interpretationibus ex suo dicere, sed omnia a spectabilibus uiris Pleimundo archiepiscopo, Asserione episcopo, Grimbaldo et Iohanne presbiteris hausisse” [Nothing is said in this or the other interpretations by

medieval scholars could have helped to construct an Alfredian ethos and model of kingship—although Pratt acknowledges that the translations could have been created by such a group, his work is nevertheless based on the assumption that Alfred was orchestrating or controlling the translations throughout the process of their creation.⁴⁷ In recent years, Malcolm Godden has written a series of articles that argue against interpreting Alfred as the translator or even the commissioner of the “Alfredian” literature. In his seminal essay, “Did King Alfred Write Anything,” he suggests that “the Alfredian translators did not operate in a world of strict truth when identifying authors.”⁴⁸ In other words, it is possible that the true authors or scribes attributed these texts to Alfred solely for his name-power rather. Godden accordingly argues that scholars should shy away from even describing the OE translations as “Alfredian” because linking the texts to Alfred’s persona closes potential avenues of study:

“As long as we believe that the king wrote the texts or controlled their composition that will strongly influence the way we read them and the kinds of meanings and emphases and points of view we are prepared to recognize in them. The belief in the king’s personal authorship makes us too inclined to interpret everything in terms of a royalist, authority-centered position and to miss much that is critical and subversive of authority.”⁴⁹

He thus argues that we should examine the texts as they are so that we can broaden our understanding of the translations’ political, devotional, and social objectives.⁵⁰ While I do believe that interpreting the translations without tying every narrative choice to Alfred’s biography is both productive and necessary for opening up avenues of inquiry, I also acknowledge that the translations, along with the prefaces, *do* establish a consistent political and

his own self, but all that may be seen has been drawn from men, Archbishop Plegmund, Bishop Asser, and the priests Grimbald and John].

See further: William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, eds. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 194-195.

⁴⁷ David Pratt, *The Political Thought of King Alfred the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁴⁸ Malcolm Godden, “Did King Alfred Write Anything?” *Medium Ævum*, Vol. 76.1 (2007): 2.

⁴⁹ Malcolm Godden, “Did King Alfred Write Anything?” 18.

⁵⁰ Malcolm Godden, “Did King Alfred Write Anything?” 18.

devotional “self” that has been constructed around Alfred’s name. In this sense, divorcing a translation from the figure of “Alfred” is challenging because texts like the *Consolatio* and the *Soliloquies* specifically cultivate an “Alfredian” self. It is tempting to imagine that this self was crafted with Alfred’s direct input, especially after scholars like Janet Bately have outlined the linguistic, tonal, and topical similarities between the translations.⁵¹ Despite these temptations, however, without further textual evidence regarding Alfred’s role as translator, we are unable to fully solve the question of authorship.

In this present study, I follow the lead of scholars like Hilary Fox and R.J. Ganze in acknowledging this problem without jumping into the coils and snarls of the authorship debate.⁵² As I noted above, my primary interest in the *Soliloquies* is how the OE text prompts Agustinus to develop and sharpen his sense of self through a dramatic staged dialogue. Citing Jorge JE Garcia’s work on the history of authorship, Ganze argues that even if we do not know the true historical author of the Alfredian corpus, the texts were nevertheless constructed around a “psuedo-historical author” who is “a mental construct that is believed by an audience—or constructed by someone...to lead an audience to believe it—to be the historical author.”⁵³ Similarly, in this chapter, I do not map what we know of Alfred’s biography directly onto the *Soliloquies*. I instead examine how the translation produces and characterizes the psuedo-historical “Alfred” as an individual subject or “self,” and ultimately, how the production of this

⁵¹ Janet Bately, “Alfred as Author and Translator,” 113-142.

⁵² R.J. Ganze, “The Individual in the Afterlife,” 22-23. See also: Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame (2011), 8-21.

⁵³ Jorge J.E. Garcia, “A Theory of the Author,” in *The Death and Resurrection of the Author*, ed. William Irwin (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 161. Cited from: R.J. Ganze, “The Individual in the Afterlife,” 22.

self throughout the text's dialogue becomes a template or script for other medieval readers.⁵⁴ To do so, it is first necessary to define and separate the *Soliloquies*' characters, or the players on the textual stage. These include:

1. Agustinus, the voice of the historical Augustine, who is understood to be the *ic*-speaker in the OE dialogue.
2. Gesceadwisnes, who is the voice of Agustinus' inner-reason.
3. The OE translator, who voices the Preface. We can assume for the purposes of this study that this voice is the psuedo-historical voice of Alfred, to whom the text is attributed in Book III. Alfred's voice overtakes the voice of Agustinus throughout the dialogue, most often during the original extended metaphors that are added to the translation.

Because Alfred's voice at times syncs up with the voice of Agustinus, or the *ic*-speaker, these three voices ultimately make up one individual person within the dialogue. The text's goal is the creation of a unified voice among these speakers through the process of accumulating knowledge via dialogue.⁵⁵ Regardless of whether the OE translation achieves this unification, Alfred's performance of an inner-dialogue based on Augustine's original text sets the process in motion, ultimately creating a way or path for readers to follow in the same process of self-building.

Preface:

The Preface to the *Soliloquies* describes this phenomenon by explicitly characterizing the translation as a path or *weig* to salvation. To the despair of scholars, the Preface begins *in medias res*, and we have now lost the beginning section—in the first lines, readers encounter an

⁵⁴ Throughout the chapter, I call the pseudo historical Alfred, "Alfred" for ease of reference, with full acknowledgment of the argument I've laid out here.

⁵⁵ I should also emphasize that while I am largely bypassing the issue of Alfredian authorship and involvement to examine the *Soliloquies* as a broader script or template, my work nevertheless relies heavily on previous scholarship that has addressed the following issues: the ways in which he used and understood the source text, discerning other texts or commentaries that he used or consulted, and/or identifying additions or subtractions that he made within his translation of the original. See further, n. 41 and 43. While this is certainly not a full list, see further a selection of relevant studies on Alfred and his translations:

extended metaphor of gathering wood from surrounding forests to build a home.⁵⁶ Assuming the Preface's speaker is the voice of 'pseudo-Alfred', he advises his fellow men who have many wains (*wæn*) to collect the same wood so that they may "on eardian æðer ge wintras ge sumeras, swa swa ic nu ne gyt ne dyde" (47) (dwell there in both the winters and the summers, in such a manner as I have not yet done). He thus highlights the ways in which searching for wood led him to greater knowledge and exhorts his readers to do the same:

"Gaderode me þonne kigclas, and stuþansceftas, and lohsceftas, and hylfa to ælcum þara told þe ic mid wircan cuðe... On ælcum treowo ic geseah hwæthwugu þæs þe ic æt ham beþorfte. Forþam ic lære ælcne ðara þe maga si, and manige wæn hæbbe, þæt he menige to þam ilcan wuda þar ic ðas stuðansceftas cearf..." (47).

(I then gathered for myself staves, and post-shafts, and cross-beams, and helms for each of the tools that I could work with... In each tree I saw something that I needed at home; therefore I exhort every person who is able, and has many wains, to direct his steps to the self-same wood where I cut the stud-shafts).

This process of gathering wood is here used to describe the act of collecting and storing information, with Alfred advising all who have the means to "fetige hym þar ma" in order to live peacefully in their created dwelling.⁵⁷ The concrete terms *kigclas* (strong sticks), *stuþensceftas* (post-shafts); *lohsceftas* (bolt-shafts); *bohtimbru* (bow-timbers) and *bolttimbru* (bolt-timbers) in the initial passage are *hapax legomena* and so do not occur elsewhere in extant Old English texts. As specific images of construction, these terms draw our attention to the precise ways in which the house was built, which as Susan Irvine notes, mirrors the way in which the author not only builds his devotional text but also how he constructs a framework around his literary work

⁵⁶ As far as we know, the preface to Alfred's *Soliloquies* circulated from an early stage with the text it introduced. There is no evidence that these circulated separately from the texts that they proceed. See further: Susan Irvine, "The Alfredian Prefaces and Epilogues," 146.

⁵⁷ For more on Alfred's building metaphor, see further: Valerie Heuchan, "God's Co-Workers and Powerful Tools: A Study of the Sources of Alfred's Building Metaphor in his Old English Translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies*," *Notes and Queries* 54 (2004): 177-209; Susan Hitch, "Alfred's cræft: imagery in Alfred's version of Augustine's *Soliloquies*," *Journal of the Department of English* (University of Calcutta 22, 1986-1987): 130-147.

through his very preface.⁵⁸ Gatch aptly observes that after calling readers to build homes using the wood (or knowledge) that they gather from the translation, Alfred himself is using his source text, or the “Augustinian wood,” to build a text that eschews Neoplatonist logic and philosophy for solely faith-based reasoning to better appeal to his readers.⁵⁹ The act of translating Augustine’s original allows him and his fellow Anglo-Saxon readers to work through difficult Latin philosophy in a way that is spiritually productive. Given the method that Alfred uses to build structures with gathered knowledge, it is appropriate that Gesceadwisnes explicitly links the successful practice of devotion with reading and writing in their dialogue, calling for Agustinus to “befæste hit [their dialogue] þonne bocstafum and awrit hit” (49) (Fasten it then in letters and write it) so that he will not forget what they have discussed.

Alfred’s gathering of wood in the forest can be linked to the idea of assembling a devotional *florilegium*, or a compilation of writings that are meant to assist readers in meditation and reflection.⁶⁰ This link is further strengthened by the explicit at the end of Book III, which finally attributes the entire text to Alfred and calls the OE translation a collection of *cwidas* (wise sayings, or guiding principles); the term *cwide* has a wide range of meanings, such as a simple

⁵⁸ Susan Irvine, “The Alfredian Prefaces and Epilogues,” *A Companion to Alfred the Great* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2014), p. 164.

⁵⁹ See: Milton Gatch, “King Alfred’s Version of the Augustine’s *Soliloquia*: Some Suggestions on its Rational and Unity,” *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. Paul Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 37. Nicole Discenza, “A Christian Art of Reading,” *The King’s English: Strategies of Translation in the Old English Boethius* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 40-45.

⁶⁰ Mary Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 217-222. In regards to Alfred’s extensive use of building imagery, Carnicelli suggests in his edition that the Preface reveals the extent of the king’s woodcraft knowledge. He cites Asser who wrote in detail about how Alfred instructed his goldsmiths and craftsmen himself, and invented a special lantern that would burn for precisely twenty-four hours. Thomas A. Carnicelli, *King Alfred’s Version of St. Augustine’s Soliloquies* (Cambridge, 1969), 38, 99. See also: Milton Gatch, ‘King Alfred’s Version of Augustine’s *Soliloquia*: Some Suggestions on its Rationale and Unity’, in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Albany, 1986), 38. For Asser, see: William Henry Stevenson (ed.), *Asser’s Life of King Alfred* (Oxford, 1904), 104.

utterance; an opinion or judgment; a guiding principle (especially in monastic rule); a judicial sentence; or a legal agreement.⁶¹ The use of *cwidas* is noteworthy here because its etymology links together oral and textual practice—common compounds of this word include *cwidegydd* (spoken utterance) and also *cwideboc* (book of wise utterances). Describing the *Soliloquies* as a collection of *cwidas* is therefore particularly apropos because the text is a written translation built from a combination of Socratic dialogue and a wide range of sources such as Augustine’s *Epistle 147*, Gregory’s *Dialogues* and *Morals*, and Jerome’s *Vulgate* and *Commentary on Luke*.⁶² The building metaphor and the gathering of *cwidas* serves to highlight the value of medieval *lectio*—rather than simply reading or hearing a text and understanding its words, medieval *lectio* required readers to gather words and ideas and place them within the storehouse of the mind to be later digested.⁶³ By doing so, texts become a part of the self, able to be recalled time and again to both influence and transform the individual’s spiritual life.

As we learn in the Preface, it is only by working hard to gather the *kiglas*, *lotsceaftas*, *bohtimbru*, and *bolttimbru* that medieval readers may eventually be granted a space in heaven; just as men build houses on earth to shelter themselves from danger, so too will building a storehouse of devotional texts in the mind shelter man from the hazards of sin. The image of the *ham* (home) continues to progress throughout the entire Preface, becoming first a place of safety and then a place where the builder may hunt and fish until he receives *bocland* (book-land) from his lord, or land that can be passed down hereditarily without end. In other words, after building the house and working the land, the builder hopes that he will be awarded eternal inheritance and property rights through the mercy of his lord. Opposite of *bocland* in the Preface is *laenland*

⁶¹ “Cwide,” *Dictionary of Old English: A to H Online*, eds. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2016).

⁶² *King Alfred’s Old English Version of St. Augustine’s Soliloquies*, ed. Henry Lee Hargrove, (New York: Holt, 1902), xxxvii.

⁶³ Mary Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 217-222.

(loan-land), which Richard Abels describes as land belonging to the royal fisc that the ruler or king could dole out as he wished.⁶⁴ For recipients of *lænland*, however, their hold on the property was not eternally insured; it was therefore more desirable that the king would give out *bocland* to ensure stability and guarantee the family's holdings. This analogy is particularly apt for a medieval devotee, who might compare their transitory home on earth to *lænland* and their eternal home in Heaven to *bocland*. In the same way, the *lænland* also represents the soul itself, which God gifts to every man and woman at birth—if the individual builds a good *ham* in the soul they are duly rewarded for all eternity. Alfred ends the Preface with a prayer that he might build and live “more comfortably” in his own dwelling, that he might be useful in this life, and looking forward to Judgment Day, that he might eventually find his eternal home with God.

While practicing devotion for medieval readers in part consists of building a home or meditative retreat within the self, the Preface makes it clear that devotion is also contingent upon two things—first, that faith is the prerequisite and the key to living well in this world, and second, that devotees must also use their gathered *cwidas* or bits of wisdom to benefit society.⁶⁵ Alfred first explains the role that faith plays in attaining salvation:

“Ac se þe me lærde, þam se wudu licode, se mæg gedon ða ic softor eardian (mæge) ægðer ge on þisum lænan stoclife be þis wæge ða while þe ic on þisse weorulde beo, ge eac on þam ecan hame ðe he us gehaten hefð þurh sanctus Augustinus and sanctus Gregorius and sanctus Ieronimus, and þurh manege oððre halie fædras. swa ic gelyfe eac þæt he gedo for heora ealra earnunge, ægðer ge þisne weig gelimfulran gedo þonne he ær þisum wes, ge hure mines modes eagan to þam ongelichte þæt ic mage rihtne weig aedrian to þam ecan hame...” (47-48)

(But he who taught me, and to whom the wood was pleasing, might make it so that I can dwell more comfortably both in this loaned habitation by the way while I am in this world, and also in the eternal home that he promised us through saint Augustine and saint Gregory and saint Jerome, and through many other holy fathers. As I believe also in the rewards that he makes for all of them, he will both make this way more convenient than it

⁶⁴ Richard Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (Harlow, 1998), 235–6.

⁶⁵ Mary Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 18.

was before this, and indeed also enlighten the eyes of the mind so that I may find the direct right way to the eternal home...).

This passage continues the extended metaphor of the *lænland* that we see above, as well as the elision of the earthly *hlaford* (lord) and God—the lord who loans him the land on earth is called “se þe me lærde þam se wudu licode” (he who taught me and to whom the wood was pleasing), and is accordingly also the lord that will give him his promised land in “þam ecan hame” (that eternal home). It is explicitly because Alfred has faith in the Lord’s promises (“þæt he gedo for heora ealra earnunge” [the rewards that he makes for all of them]) that he might live comfortably in both this life and the next. Most notably, perhaps, Alfred is only able to discern these promises through the works of Augustine, Gregory, and Jerome as intermediaries; it is therefore by reading their texts that Alfred gains the knowledge to build his *ham* (home) and to gain salvation. The call to read and emulate these Church Fathers is not unusual, but it is worth noting that Alfred’s translation of the *Soliloquies*, itself a selection of *cwidas* from Augustine, Gregory, and Jerome, provides a neat contained script for medieval readers to find salvation. As Irvine observes, Alfred’s use of the building metaphor to signify the gathering of wisdom from Church Fathers highlights the ways in which the book itself functions as a physical space for accumulated wisdom.⁶⁶ From the passage above, he makes it clear that studying devotional texts and having faith in them opens up easier access to God, who will accordingly “þisne weig gelimfulran gedo þonne he ær þissum wes” (make this way more convenient than it was before). This type of reading, per the concept of *lectio divina*, also means contemplating, praying, and meditating on what was read. For both Alfred and the medieval reader, meditation on the *Soliloquies* necessarily means gathering information from the text, storing it within the mind, and reenacting the same dialogue that Agustinus performs within their own individual

⁶⁶ Susan Irvine, “The Alfredian Prefaces and Epilogues,” 164.

selves. It is through performing the text that medieval devotees can process it, just as Alfred performs the dialogue for himself when he translates, adds to, and personalizes Augustine's original work.

Moreover, according to the Preface, the successful use of the *Soliloquies* also means productively using what was read within the world. Alfred's mention of *bocland*, for example, draws attention to the hierarchies that exist on earth and in heaven—the earthly and heavenly lords are the only ones who can dole out property rights, while the builder must work hard and hope to achieve higher status within the realm. The details Alfred includes in his metaphor, like that each individual must “yrfe þurh his hlaforðes miltse geearnige” (48) (earn the inheritance from his lord's mercy), ground his teachings in the corporeal world, positioning earth as a direct mirror of the eternal world. In his study of Alfredian spirituality, Scott DeGregorio suggests that Alfred's *Soliloquies* emphasizes the importance of practical spirituality—in other words, the text demonstrates how what we read should directly influence our actions in “þisum lænan stoclife” (47) (this loaned habitation).⁶⁷ The power of the *Soliloquies* as a devotional text in turn lies in how the information is realized within the world once the individual commits it to memory.

As we first saw in the Introduction, Gregory explicitly spells out this notion for readers in his *Moralia in Job*: “In nobismetipsis namque debemus transformare quod legimus, ut cum per auditum se animus excitat, ad operandum quod audierit vita concurrat” (We must transform that which we read into our selves, so that when our mind is aroused by what it hears, we may hasten to accomplish in our lives what we have heard.)⁶⁸ He is here synthesizing Augustine and

⁶⁷ Scott DeGregorio, “Texts, Topoi and the self: a reading of Alfredian Spirituality,” *Early Medieval Europe*, Vol. 13, Issue 1 (2005): 81.

⁶⁸ Gregory, *Moralia in Job*, I.33, *CCSL*, I.43, ll. 16-18. The *Moralia in Job* was popular both in England and on the Continent. Helmut Gneuss found 3 seventh and eighth century Northumbrian manuscripts/fragments, one late eighth century southern English or Mercian manuscript, and also possibly a later ninth century manuscript with English provenance. See further: Helmut Gneuss,

Benedict to say that reading or hearing a text is only the first stage of devotion—the end goal being to incorporate the text within the self and apply it within one’s own language, behavior, and community.⁶⁹ DeGregorio suggests that after a text was integrated into real life action then it was complete for the medieval reader.⁷⁰ I would argue, however, that the process of integrating texts like the *Soliloquies* into everyday life was a never-ending, ongoing process for medieval readers. Alfred’s translation is productive precisely because it can be re-read and re-enacted every time the reader picked up the book, or every time he or she mentally returns to the narrative for contemplation. As a *weig* or path to salvation, readers must maneuver through the *Soliloquies*’ internal dialogue and incorporate what they have learned into their own devotional practice, just as Alfred gathered up and reinterpreted Augustine’s conversation with Ratio in his OE translation.

Performing Dialogue in the OE *Soliloquies*:

In his study of the Alfredian translation project, Malcolm Godden succinctly writes, “if we can say anything at all about King Alfred’s taste in literature, it is that he loved the dialogue as a form.”⁷¹ The inner dialogue of the soliloquy was for Alfred “a way of capturing an imagined debate between different perspectives and world-pictures.”⁷² It catches a reader’s attention and

A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001).

⁶⁹ Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-42. See also: A. De Vogüé, “Lectiones sanctas libenter audire: lecture et prière chez saint Benoît,” *Benedictina* 27 (1980): 11–27; Scott DeGregorio, “Texts, Topoi and the self,” 81.

⁷⁰ Scott DeGregorio, “Texts, Topoi and the self,” 81-82.

⁷¹ Malcolm Godden, “The Alfredian Project and Its Aftermath: Rethinking the Literary History of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries” in *Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture, Proceedings of the British Academy*, 162 (2009), 93-122, at 110.

⁷² Malcolm Godden, “The Alfredian Project and Its Aftermath,” 110.

provides different perspectives with which to view tricky philosophical concepts. Directly after the Preface ends, the OE *Soliloquies* launches into the dialogue between Agustinus and Gesceadwisnes (Reason), keeping close to the trajectory of the Latin *Soliloquia*. In both the Latin and OE texts, the relationship between the two main characters (Augustine/Agustinus and Ratio/Gesceadwisnes) is initially difficult to discern. For example, Augustine opens up Book I of the *Soliloquia* with the following statement:

“Volventi mihi multa ac varia mecum diu ac per multos dies sedula quaerenti memetipsum ac bonum meum, quidve mali evitandum esset, ait mihi subito sive ego ipse sive alius quis, extrinsecus sive intrinsecus, nescio; nam hoc ipsum est quod magnopere scire molior, ait ergo mihi...” (I.22).

(For many days I had been debating within myself many and diverse things, seeking constantly, and with anxiety, to find out my real self, my best good, and the evil to be avoided, when suddenly one—I know not, but eagerly strive to know, whether it were myself or another, within me or without—said to me...).

Here, Augustine questions whether Ratio is part of himself, but does not go on to fully explain his findings—only that he “quod magnopere scire molior” (but eagerly strive to know). He instead leaves room for disagreement, especially because the characters Ratio and Augustine remain for the most part distinct throughout the narrative. When Ratio eventually speaks, however, she goes on to conflate herself with Augustine in Book II: “pacatissime, ut opinor, et commodissime placuit a meipso interrogatum mihique respondentem deo adiuvante verum quarere” (II.88) (so that I think it tends most to peace and is best suited to the search after Truth that, God helping, I reply to questions put by myself). She previously uses the first person plural when discussing her and Augustine’s joint efforts, and this is the first time in the dialogue in which she refers to Augustine’s activities using “I” and “myself.” This subtle slip in Ratio’s mask allows readers to answer the narrative’s primary mystery, which we first encounter when Augustine asks, “sive ego ipse sive alius quis, extrinsecus sive intrinsecus” (22) (whether it [the

voice] were myself or another, within me or without me). In other words, here we are able to briefly glimpse the fact that these two characters are one individual.

In the OE *Soliloquies*, Alfred helpfully provides more information regarding the characters' relationship so that readers do not need to guess at the truth. Directly before the dialogue begins, the Preface explicitly states that it was written by Augustine and is designed to investigate the mind's doubt:

“Agustinus, Cartaina bisceop, worhte twa bec be his agnum ingeþance; þa bec sint gehatene Soliloquiorum, þat is, be hys modis smeauge and tweounga, hu hys gesceadwisnes answarode hys mode þonne þæt mod ymb hwæt tweonode, oðþe hit hwæs wilnode to witanne þæs þe hit ær for sweotole ongytan ne meahte” (48).

(Augustine, bishop of Carthage, made two books about [or ‘by’] his own *ingeþance*. These books are called Soliloquies, that is, about [or ‘by’] his mind's contemplation and consternation, how his reason answered his mind, when the mind doubted, or what it wanted to know, because before it could not understand clearly).

Because Alfred specifies that “hys gesceadwisnes answarode hys mode” (his reason answered his mind), medieval readers know from the very beginning that the speakers performing the dialogue are two facets of one individual. Alfred's use of the preposition ‘be’ is important here, for it could either mean “by” or “about” his own *ingeþance*.⁷³ As Hilary Fox suggests, the *ingeþance* can function either as a type of author/instrument by which the text was created, or it can simply indicate the subject of the text.⁷⁴ Fox goes on to note that if we are to take this word as a preposition with the dative rather than adverbially with *worhte*, this confers a sense of individual agency onto man's *ingeþance* which works to correct Agustinus' sense of doubt or misunderstanding from the inside.⁷⁵ Alfred thus suggests that the mind and the reason are

⁷³ Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” 177.

⁷⁴ Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” 177.

⁷⁵ Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” 177.

separated in their experience with guilt—when Agustinus’ mind doubted, his reason seeks to answer him in a way that removes doubt and error via dialogue.

The transition between the Preface and the beginning of the dialogue sequence is seamless and occurs without any further commentary. Alfred retains the opening of the Latin *Soliloquia* that we saw above, but makes notable additions:

“Þa reahte he, hys mod for oft geasciende and smeagende mislicu and selcuð þing, and ealles swiðust ymbe hyne sylfne: hwæt he sylf wære, hwæþer hys mod and hys sawel deadlic were and gewitendlice, þe heo were alibbendu and ecu; and eft ymbe hys god: hwæt he were and hwilce he were, and hwilc good him were betst to donne and hwilc yfel betst to forletende. Agustinus⁷⁶: þa answerde me sum ðing, ic nat hwæt, hweðer þe ic sylf þe oðer þing, ne þæt nat, hwæðer hit wæs innan me ðe utan; butan þæs ic soðlicost wene, þat hyt min sceadwisnes were; and þa cwæð heo to me...” (48-49).

(Then he said, his mind often went fearing and searching out various and rare things, and most of all about himself—*what he was: whether his mind and his soul were mortal and perishable, or ever-living and eternal; and again, about his God, what He was, and of what nature He was; and what good it were best for him to do, and what evil best to forsake. Then answered me something, I know not what, whether myself or some other thing; nor know I whether it was within me or without; but this one thing I most truly know, that it was my Reason; and it said to me...*).

The OE translation begins in the third person, initially keeping the same speaker from the Preface. Alfred divides Agustinus’ attention between the *sylfne* (the self) and God in this passage, citing specific concerns about the mortality of the soul and the mind. Whereas Augustine assumes that knowing “memetipsum” (my true self) will lead to knowing God, Agustinus carefully delineates between knowing “hwæt he sylf wære” (what his self was) and also “ymbe hys god, hwæt he were” (about his God, what He was). Like Augustine, Agustinus *does* seek to know God by retreating into the inner-self; and yet, in separating the self and God in

⁷⁶ This is the final time (after having been named once in the Preface) that the manuscript uses the name “Agustinus.” Hereafter, the dialogue is marked only with “þa cwæð ic” (then I said) and “þa cwæð heo” (then she said).

this passage, he also foreshadows his tendency throughout the soliloquy to look outward and to situate the self in regards to the social and political hierarchies of the corporeal world.

It is at this point that the OE passage becomes muddled. We can assume the clause “hwæt he were and hwilce he were” (what he was and of what nature he was) is connected with “ymbe hys god” (about his God) because if the statements were referring back to Agustinus it would be an odd repetition of the “hwæt he sylf wære” (what his self was) that came before in the passage. The next clause, however, which states “and hwilc good him were betst to donne and hwilc yfel betst to forletende” (what good it was best for him to do and what evil it was best for him to forsake) switches back to discussing the parameters of Agustinus’ *sylfne* (self) rather than God’s. In regards to narrative voice, the speaker from the Preface disappears entirely in the next clause, changing into first person using *me* and *ic* (I) for the remainder of the dialogue: *þa answarode me sum þing, ic nat hwæt, hweðer þe ic sylf þe oðer þing*” (Then answered me something, I know not what, whether myself or some other thing). In the Cotton Vitellius A xv manuscript, the dialogue is marked for the rest of the text by the phrases “*þa cwæð ic*” (then I said) and “*þa cwæð heo*” (then she said) for Agustinus and Gesceadwisnes—these phrases are integrated within the main block of text, but they are also set apart by rubrication so that readers can more easily follow the two characters’ banter.⁷⁷

Ruth Waterhouse notes that this back-and-forth dialogue is particularly effective because readers are able to discover for themselves what to believe by engaging with the two characters’ discussion of theological truths.⁷⁸ She goes on to suggest that readers are invited to participate

⁷⁷ For reference to the manuscript, see the most recent ‘Digital Beowulf’ edition: Kevin S. Kiernan, *Electronic Beowulf - Fourth Edition* (2015), <http://ebeowulf.uky.edu/ebeo4.0/CD/main.html>

⁷⁸ Ruth Waterhouse, “Tone in Alfred’s Version of Augustine’s *Soliloquies*,” 78-9.

indirectly in the relationship between Augustine and Gesceadwisnes through active listening.⁷⁹

While I agree that the two-character framework does create a dramatic dialogue, instead of *indirect* participation, I suggest that the soliloquy form allows readers to participate *directly* in the dialogue; namely, by inserting themselves into the narrative as the *ic*-speaker in order to ask the same questions Augustine poses to his inner reason. As scholars of performance and semiotics have shown, the way in which a reader engages with a narrative, as well as the way he or she imagines a text's narrative world within the mind, is related to deictic function, or direct verbal exchange that is ordered by pronouns. For Jean Alter in his study *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre*, deixis allows the reader to engage in creative world-building; he states, "the referential story always lacks some precision, and individual spectators must draw on their own experience or imagination to round up its concretization in their minds."⁸⁰ This concept of world-building is particularly useful in the *Soliloquies* because readers are asked to conceptualize the metaphysical space of the mind at the same time they are digesting the text's rapid dialogue.

For scholars like Jeremy Scott, the use of deixis in dialogue "allows readers to empathize with characters, narrators, and their situations" in order to enhance their understanding and conceptualization of the text's subject.⁸¹ As I noted in the Introduction, Peter Stockwell refers to this practice as "deictic projection," in which readers are able to "throw" their deictic center to become another character—in essence, to see the world from an altered point of view, or to take

⁷⁹ Ruth Waterhouse, "Tone in Alfred's Version of Augustine's *Soliloquies*," 78-9.

⁸⁰ Jean Alter, *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 97-98. Using Alter's work on performance as a framework, medieval scholar Allen J. Frantzen similarly applies the "feedback process" of a heard performance to the Anglo-Saxon hall in which *scops* performed. Allen J. Frantzen, "Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry: The Scene from Cynewulf's *Juliana*," *Theatre Survey* 48:1 (2007): 99-119, at 105-6.

⁸¹ Jeremy Scott, "Worlds from Words: Theories of Creative World-building as Creative Writing Toolbox," in *World Building: Discourse in the Mind*, eds. Joanna Gavins and Ernestine Lahey (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 127-146, at 134.

into consideration multiple points of view at the same time.⁸² The deictic center in the case refers to an individual's egocentric conception of where he/she is in space and time, as well as in social and political hierarchies.⁸³ In the case of the *Soliloquies*, although readers are told concretely that the *ic*-speaker is Agustinus at the beginning of the text, the repetitive use of the deictic *ic* and *heo* as abstract referents allows individual readers to simultaneously imagine themselves as both the "ic" and the "heo" within the dialogue. In essence, the reader is able to re-create the dialogic scene within his mind, using his own *ingepance* (inner-mind), or the dialogue between himself as *ic* and his own Gesceadwisnes (Reason), as characters.

Like the Latin *Soliloquia*, the OE translation ultimately demands from its readers what Plato's Socrates demanded from his interlocutors—active learning, self-examination, and an appreciation for the complexity of wisdom. In essence, philosophical dialogues place the responsibility of resolving arguments and contradictions within the narrative back on the reader.⁸⁴ They do not only provide readers with prepackaged scripts for success, but rather ask them to follow along, to compare answers with Agustinus and Gesceadwisnes, and to pursue those questions that the texts raise.⁸⁵ As Patrick Downey rightly suggests, philosophical dialogues irritate the reader into being inquisitive and rational in order to eventually experience the joy of comprehension.⁸⁶ And just as Augustine explains in his initial definition of the

⁸² See further: Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), 42-44. First cited from: Jeremy Scott, "Worlds from Words: Theories of Creative World-building as Creative Writing Toolbox," 134.

⁸³ Dan McIntyre, "Deictic Shifts in Dramatic Texts," *Point of View in Plays: A Cognitive Stylistic Approach to Viewpoint in Drama and Other Text-Types* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2006), 92-95.

⁸⁴ See further: Michael Foley, "A Spectacle to the World," 257.

⁸⁵ Plato argues that written conversations are a philosophical second best because long speeches require the participant to become passive.

⁸⁶ See further: Patrick Downey, *Serious Comedy: The Philosophical and Theological Significance of Tragic and Comic Writing in the West-ern Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Lexington

soliloquy, this form also gives readers the courage to ask basic questions without fear of judgment. In this way, the dialogue in both texts illustrate and perform for readers the struggle by which an individual soul may gain wisdom of the divine, hoping to see (or at least partially glimpse) eternal Truth.

The most important thing to note is that while Agustinus is in a private dialogue with his own mind, the *Soliloquies* functions as a didactic tool for a wider audience or readership. After all, a soliloquy is at its very roots a rhetorical mode—rather than a privately enclosed meditation, it appeals to an audience.⁸⁷ In his introduction to Plato, Paul Friedlander states: “the written dialogue transmits its dialogical and dialectical dynamics to the reader. To him is addressed every question...and this dialogical dynamics continues to echo within him beyond the conclusion. The dialogue is the only form of book that seems to suspend the book itself.”⁸⁸ The same applies to Augustine’s *Soliloquia* and the OE translation. I suggest that part of this text’s success in the early Middle Ages is its capacity to act as a spiritual exercise not just for Alfred, but for all who read it. As a form of Socratic dialogue, there is no winner or loser in the *Soliloquia*—rather, both Agustinus and Gesceadwisnes engage their audience by joining in a cooperative search for wisdom and truth. Moreover, because the translation is entirely in the present tense, and possesses a complete lack of indirect reporting, the soliloquy reads more as an active performance rather than a secondary account or story.⁸⁹ As a form of spiritual exercise,

Books, 2001). See also: Michael P. Foley, “Cicero, Augustine, and the Philosophical Roots of the Cassiciacum Dialogues,” *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (1999): 51–77.

⁸⁷ As Hans Robert Jauss suggests in his study of the shaping force of an audience, “this historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressees.” Hans Robert Jauss, “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory,” *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 19

⁸⁸ Paul Friedlander, *Plato: An Introduction*, trans. H. Meyerhoff (New York: Bollingen, 1958), 166.

⁸⁹ Michael Foley, “A Spectacle to the World,” 253. This is also one of the elements that distinguishes theater for Aristotle. See further: Aristotle, *Poetics*, Book 3.1448a; ll. 25-30.

this mode of writing possesses the attributes of a scripted play through its use of characterization and continuous narrative. This text can therefore be compared to a play insofar as it includes a plot and characters. This in turn allows readers to ‘witness’ the dialogue as it occurs so that they can internalize the arguments and reenact them within their own minds.

If we consider the *Soliloquies* as a ‘play-script’ that readers can incorporate into their own devotion, the text’s setting becomes essential for the creative world-building that is necessary for virtual reenactment.⁹⁰ Both Augustine and Alfred keep the setting of their dialogues mysterious and abstract. Although Agustinus *does* tell readers who wrote the text in the Preface, he does not elaborate or give any other context about the ensuing dialogue. Like the Latin *Soliloquia*, Agustinus moves quickly away from his initial confusion by launching into a discussion on memory, truth, and wisdom. By eschewing context and jumping into the dialogue with his guide, he leaves readers in the dark, so to speak—we are thus unaware where the dialogue takes place (whether it is at Cassiciacum as we assume in the Latin *Soliloquia*, or in another unspecified location). There is a tension in both the Latin and the OE *Soliloquies* between the realism of the dialogue and the abstraction of the setting. Applying Alter’s concept of referentiality that we saw above, readers must individually supply context so that the text in question can be both complete and successful.⁹¹ In the case of the *Soliloquies*, because the text’s setting is an abstraction that occurs away from the eyes, within the mind of the *ic*-speaker, readers are asked to engage in an ego-centric reading by substituting their own mental space for

⁹⁰ For more on the concept of readerly reenact and ‘virtual performance’, see further: Jody Enders, *The Medieval Theatre of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999). For more on the cognitive process of imagining performance, see: Jill Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture: Sensual Piety in Late Medieval York* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). And also: Katherine Zieman, “Reading, Singing, and Understanding: Constructions of the Literacy of Women Religious in Late Medieval England,” in *Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Aboard*, ed. Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

⁹¹ Frantzen, “Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry,” 105.

the unspecified setting. As semioticians like Alter and Keir Elam suggest, the act of supplying context for the narrative, whose characters and setting lack concrete referentiality, is all part and parcel of the creative world-building that is required to occur before the text can truly be complete.⁹² This form of interactivity is crucial for a devotional text like the *Soliloquies*, whose didactic goal is to engage readers in reflection and meditation, and to guide them to an understanding of their *sylfnes* (selves).

Along with his *ic* and *heo* framework and the abstract setting, Alfred welcomes readerly engagement and the process of substitution by explicitly leaving open the scope of the entire project. Whereas Ratio specifically commands, “Nec modo cures invitationem turbae legentium” (I.22) (Do not make any effort to attract a crowd of readers), Gesceadwisnes leaves out this command. Instead, she tells Agustinus to locate “fæawa cuðe men and creftige mid þe, ðe nan wiht ne amyrdan, ac fultmoden to þinum creft” (49) (a few wise and skillful men with you who would not hinder you a wit, but give assistant to your craft). Ratio makes it clear that Augustine’s dialogue was not created for the public at large; rather, it was meant to be confined to a small group of readers, perhaps those at Cassiciacum who adhere to the same doctrinal tenants as he followed himself. The changes that we see in Alfred’s translation are in part indicative of a desire to reach a wider Anglo-Saxon audience; he leaves the door open for a larger readership who come to the dialogue with diverse educational backgrounds. He also showcases the potential diversity of this readership by anchoring his extended metaphors in daily activities, from woodcutting to a knight’s duty to the feeling of a lover’s touch. By drawing on both medieval and classical exegesis and by adopting Augustine’s internal dialogue, Alfred has a

⁹² Jean Alter, *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre*, 98-100. Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 123-67.

unique opportunity to educate his readers without having to use overtly didactic forms like homilies or sermons.

As a devotional tool, the soliloquy form that Augustine and Alfred employ allows readers to cease relying on (potentially misleading) teachers within the world to both delve deeper into the self and to discover elements of the soul that are unreachable to the senses. In his later *Sermons*, Augustine makes clear the contrast between his own work as a teacher and the work of Christ as Inner Teacher. While reading and listening to sermons was good practice, he calls on his audience to look inward: “Redite ergo ad cor: et si fideles estis, invenietis ibi Christum; ipse vobis loquitur ibi, ego enim clamo; ille vero in silentio plus docet” (Therefore return to the heart: and if you are believers, you will find Christ there; he himself is speaking to you there. For I am shouting: but truly he in silence teaches more.).⁹³ Because Christ dwells within the inner soul as teacher, locating and seeing one’s true self also means also locating and seeing God—for, as Augustine states in an apostrophic prayer at the beginning of the *Soliloquia*, God is He who “fecisti hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem tuam, quod qui se ipse novit, agnoscit” (I.28) (has made man after your own image and likeness, which he knows himself recognizes). The turn that Augustine and Alfred make as authors to the soliloquy form simulates the path that all men should follow in their search to find their Inner Teacher. In his prayer at the very beginning of the dialogue, Agustinus accordingly lengthens Augustine’s original prayer in the *Soliloquia* and begs God to teach him.

⁹³ Augustine, *Opera Omnia* in *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1844), Sermo 102. Augustine, *Sermons*, ed. John E. Rotelle and trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 1990).

The Partnership of Agustinus and Gesceadwisnes:

While the Latin and OE texts share the same didactic goals, they differ most in the specific style or method of teaching. Perhaps one of the greatest changes in Alfred's translation is the relationship between Agustinus and his interlocutor, Gesceadwisnes. Whereas Augustine and Ratio often fall into the vertical hierarchy of teacher and student, the dialogue between Agustinus and Gesceadwisnes is more horizontal in nature. Like Plato's Socratic dialogues, Augustine's dialogue focuses on logic and reason first and foremost, not only as a topic of conversation but also as a matter for drama. The conversations between Augustine and Ratio are therefore rife with dramatic conflict, with Ratio reproving and poking fun when Augustine fails her tests of logic, and with Augustine replying in anger when his knowledge is put to the test. For Alfred, maintaining the dramatic pacing, the witty banter, and the theatrics of the original is not as important as the successful distillation of Augustine's doctrine for his Anglo-Saxon audience.

Waterhouse's work on Alfred's *Soliloquies* details many such tonal shifts that occur between the Latin original and the OE translation. She argues that Alfred altered his translation to appeal and to relate to his own Anglo-Saxon audience.⁹⁴ And she aptly notices that the relationship between Agustinus and Gesceadwisnes sets the tone for Alfred's entire translation. Harkening briefly back to Augustine's *Soliloquia*, the passage in which Ratio first describes the point of their soliloquy and reprimands Augustine for his shame is particularly helpful in establishing this difference between source and translation. After catching Augustine in a fallacy after his hasty assent, Ratio states, "Ridiculum est si te pudet, quasi non ob id ipsum elegerimus huiusmodi sermocinationes" (88) (It is ridiculous if you are ashamed, as if it were not for this very reason that we have chosen this mode of discourse). Although Alfred had largely ceased

⁹⁴ Ruth Waterhouse, "Tone in Alfred's Version of the Soliloquies," *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 47-85, at 48-49.

translating Augustine's text by this point in Book II, he does make this point, albeit more simply, in Book I: "Þe gedafenað to lerrenne and me to hlistenne, and me dafenað to andsweorianne þes ðe ic ongyte be mynes andgytes mæðe, gyf ic hys awiht ongyte. Gif (ic) ðonne nawh(it) ne ongyte, þonne sceal ic beo þæs geðafa and letan hyt to þinum dome" (48-49) (It is fitting for you to teach and for me to listen, and it is fitting for me to answer what I understand by my understanding, if I understand it at all. If I then do not understand, then I must admit it, and leave it to your judgment). The difference between the two passages is clear: Ratio takes charge and guides her pupil despite the shame and ill-humor that Augustine demonstrates, while Agustinus is the one to defend their question and answer form in the *Soliloquies*. It is noteworthy that Agustinus, as the supposed subordinate to Gesceadwisnes, would be the one to define their roles and status within the text. While he recognizes that Gesceadwisnes should teach and guide their conversations, he also takes a greater role in setting up their arguments.

Augustine, unlike Agustinus, accepts a more passive role in his relationship with Ratio in the *Soliloquia*. After just a short preamble in which Augustine attempts to explain the upcoming dialogue, Ratio jumps straight into her questioning with the command, "Ecce." She follows up this command with another—"Fac te invenisse aliquid; cui commendabis, ut pergas ad alia?" (I.22) ("Look! Consider if you had discovered something, to whom would you trust your discovery, so that you could move on to other things?). The pair then fall into the typical Socratic rhythm in which Ratio asks pointed questions and Augustine expresses his ignorance, poses solutions, and defends his own answers. Gesceadwisnes, on the other hand, immediately softens her imperative command in a hypothetical statement: "Gyf ðu enigne godne heorde hæbbe, þe wel cunne healdan þæt þæt ðu gestreone and him befæste, sceawa hyne me...forþam þu ne meaht ægðer ge ealne weig ofor þam sittan ðe þu gestryned hæfst and healdan, ge eac maran

strynan” (49) (If you have any good guardian who can hold well what you gain and commit to him, show him to me...for you cannot both keep and hold always that which you have gained, and also gain more). The use of *gyf* is here much less emphatic than *ecce*, and this hypothetical imperative is followed by a causal clause that explains Ratio’s initial command.⁹⁵ By explaining why he needs to find a *godne heord* (good guardian), Gesceadwisnes allows both Agustinus and his readers access to his rationale—as opposed to Augustine’s Ratio, who begins her questioning with no context or glimpse of her purpose.⁹⁶

After this hypothetical imperative, Agustinus turns his response into the text’s first direct question that necessitates an affirmative response from Gesceadwisnes—“hwam wille ic ælles befæstan þæt ic elles gestryne butan minum geminde?” (49) (To what shall I commit what more I get, if not to my memory?). This change may be, as Waterhouse suggests, simply indicative of the Anglo-Saxon preference for concrete diction and elaborated syntax—but it also highlights a distinctive closeness or intimacy between Augustine and Gesceadwisnes that runs throughout Alfred’s translation.⁹⁷ While Gesceadwisnes does take on the role of teacher for Agustinus, she goes on the dialogic journey with him rather than leading him along by the nose. The close relationship between these two characters indicates (more so than Augustine’s original) that they are two voices within one psyche.⁹⁸ This change in the dialogue’s hierarchy may seem slight, but it nevertheless gestures to a wider shift in the relationship between Agustinus and Gesceadwisnes that in turn affects how readers relate to the text.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Ruth Waterhouse, “Tone in Alfred’s Version of the Soliloquies,” 51.

⁹⁶ Ratio instead asks Augustine and the reader to accumulate knowledge from the dialogue and assemble it on their own time.

⁹⁷ Ruth Waterhouse, “Tone in Alfred’s Version of the Soliloquies,” 51.

⁹⁸ Ruth Waterhouse, “Tone in Alfred’s Version of the Soliloquies,” 51.

⁹⁹ Ruth Waterhouse, “Tone in Alfred’s Version of the Soliloquies,” 49.

Constructing the Self, The Ingeþance and the Community:

Because the way to salvation depends on both retreating into the self and maintaining a place within the community, early medieval readers were accordingly anxious to unravel the complicated relationship between the self, the body, and the world—namely, how the soul or the mind is distinct from the body, and how the mind is distinct from the soul. Rather than a simple dichotomy between body and soul, Anglo-Saxons constructed a complex schema of body, mind, soul, and exterior world. While we are bodies bounded by skin, we are also permeable in every sense, and our minds and spirits are able to be penetrated by thoughts, good or bad. The *Soliloquies* in part seeks to depict this troubled relationship between these categories. According to both Augustine and Agustinus, the mind and its content constitute an interior space (the *homo interior* or the *ingeþance*) which is passable or permeable—in other words, the mind can express itself in the world and the exterior world can influence the mind. Every individual becomes a site of turmoil in which the outer mind seeks to deceive the inner mind in order to gain earthly wealth or power.¹⁰⁰

In order to work out this relationship between the corporeal world and the *ingeþance*, the entire first book of the *Soliloquies* investigates the relationship between sensory perception and acquiring knowledge. The text's dialogue examines how outward senses may perceive only physical things, while inward senses perceive abstract concepts like truth and faith. In Alfred's translation, he extensively pursues and elaborates on this relationship between 'inner' and 'outer' through extended metaphors and extra-dialogue in an attempt to disentangle these complex philosophical questions. In Book I, after discussing whether Agustinus wishes to know God as he knows his friend Alypius, he explains to Gesceadwisnes, "ic wolde witan swa be Gode on minre

¹⁰⁰ It is unclear within this text whether or not the mind recognizes this process or whether it remains an unconscious deception.

gesceadwisnesse and on minum ingeþance, þæt me nan þing gemyrran ne mahte, ne on nanum tweonunga gebringan” (58) (I would have such knowledge about God, in my reason and in my inner mind, that nothing could disturb me nor bring me into any doubt).¹⁰¹ What is striking about Agustinus’ conception of the relationship between inner and outer senses is that they are interdependent. In other words, without first learning from the eyes, Agustinus would be unable to comprehend anything with the *ingeþance*, or the eyes of the mind.

Regarding the usefulness of corporeality, for example, Gesceadwisnes directly asks Agustinus: “Hweðer geleornodest þu, þe mid þam eagem, þe mid þam ingeþance?” (61) (How do you learn, with the eyes or with the mind?) to which Agustinus quickly replies,

“Mid ægðrum ic hyt gleornode: aræst myd þam eagem and syðþan myd þam ingeþance. Ða eagan me gebrohton on þam angytte. Ac syðþan ic hyt þa ongyten hæfde, þa forlæt ic þa sceawunga mid þam eagem and þohte; forði me þuhte þæt ic his mæate micle mare geþencan ðonne ic his mahte geseon, siððan þe eagan hyt ætfæstnodon minum ingeþance” (61).

(I learn with both: first with the eyes and then with the inner mind. The eyes brought me to the understanding; but after I had perceived it, I left off looking with the eyes, and reflected, for it seemed to me that I could contemplate much more of it than I could see, after the eyes had fixed it in my mind).

In addition to outlining the order of operations for obtaining wisdom, this passage also demonstrates the reciprocal nature of the inner and outer self for Agustinus. It is the physical eyes who first fasten on an object before the mind’s eyes (personified as reason) are able to fully comprehend it. In this way, the eyes are a stepping stone that allow devotees to gather information, fix the images in the mind, and reflect upon them within the *ingeþance* at their leisure. Gesceadwisnes accordingly takes great pains to emphasize the connection between the corporeal eyes and the *modes eagan*: “Ac ðu scealt witan ðæt ic þe þe nu wið sprece, ic eom

¹⁰¹ Unlike his knowledge of Alypius, which he confesses is limited because he doesn’t even know himself, Agustinus wishes to comprehend everything with his *ingeþance* rather than solely with his outer senses.

gesceadwisnes, and ic eom ælcum manniscum mode on þam stale þe seo hawung byð þam eagem” (65) (But you must know that I who now speak with you am Reason, and I am to every human mind what looking is to the eyes). For Alfred, this is all part and parcel of making the eyes sound enough to better ‘see’ God and the self; for him to understand his own *ingeþance*, he must use *gesceadwisnes* in addition to virtues like *wysdom*, *eadmeto*, *wærscype*, and *mildheortnes* to anchor or fasten his mind’s eye on truth. In Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, this connection between corporeal senses and divine understanding is markedly absent—the devotee is instead instructed to disregard information gathered by the senses if he or she desires to come closer to God.¹⁰² While Agustinus, too, believes that the corporeal senses can betray the *modes eagan* (eyes of the mind), he is more willing to acknowledge the relevance of corporeal senses as well as the benefits of earthly relationships and hierarchies.

In this way, the shift between the *eagan* and the *modes eagan* in the OE passages above mirrors the larger relationship between *ingeþance* and corporeal world, public and private, that occurs throughout the dialogue. Perhaps the best example of how Alfred links mankind’s experience on earth with his or her ultimate salvation is through the original extended metaphors he adds at the end of Book I. These metaphors represent the social mores and strati that make up Anglo-Saxon society, and engage readers by providing recognizable visualizations of abstract concepts like faith and devotion. The precision with which Alfred expands and develops his

¹⁰² In Book I, Ratio asks Augustine about how he plans to understand their dialogue (I.32-33):
 R: “Respuis igitur in hac causa omne testimonium sensuum?” (You therefore reject, in this case, all the testimony of the senses?).

A: “Prorsus respuo” (I utterly reject it).

R: “Quid? Illum familiarem tuum, quem te adhuc ignorare dixisti, sensu vis nosse an intellectu? (What? That friend of yours, whom you have said you still don’t know, do you want to know him by sense or by intellect?)

A: “Sensu quidem quod in eo novi, si tamen sensu aliquid noscitur, et vile est et satis est. Illam vero partem, qua mihi amicus est, id est ipsum animum, intellectu adsequi cupio.” (What I know of him by sense, if indeed I know anything, is both worthless and sufficient. But that part of him which to me is a friend, that is the soul of the man, I wish to grasp by the intellect).

metaphors suggests that they are integral to understanding the relationship between the mind's complex spatial dimensions.¹⁰³ In an entirely new addition to the text, *Gesceadwisnes* provides a series of extended metaphors to explain the love and search for wisdom. After first comparing wisdom to a nude woman who must be touched skin-to-skin to truly feel her, she then offers up “oðre bysne be þam wisdome” (77) (other examples about wisdom) that hinge man's social responsibility to his lord:

“Geðence ny hweðer awiht mani mann cynges ham sece þer ðær he ðonne on tune byd, oððe hys gemot, oððe hys fird, oððe hweðer ðe ðince þæt hi æalle on anne weig þeder cumen. Ic wene þeah ðæt hi cumen on swiðe manige wegas: sume cumað swiðe feorran, and habbað swiðe længne weig and swiðe yfelne and swiðe earfoðferne; sume habbað swiðe langne and swiðe rihtne and swiðe godne. Sume habbað swiðe scortne and þeah wone and nearone and fuulne; sume habbað scordne and smeðne and rihtne; and þeah cumað æalle to anum hlaforde, sume æð, sume uneð. Naðer ne hi þeder gelice eaðe cumað, ne hi þer gelice eaðe ne beoð. Sume beoð on maran are and on maran eðnesse þonne sume, sume on læssan, sume ful neah buton, buton þæt an þæt he lufað. Swa hit bið æac be þam wisdome...” (77).

(Reflect upon whether any man seeks the king's home there where he lives in town, or his court, or his army, or whether it seems to you that they all must come thither by the same road. On the contrary, I know they would come by very many roads: some would come from afar, and would have a very long road that was very bad and very difficult; some would have a very long and very direct and very good road; some would have a very short and yet hard and straight and foul road; some would have a short and smooth and a good road; and yet they all would come to one and the same lord, some more easily, some with more difficulty; neither to they come thither with like ease, nor are they there alike at ease. Some are in more honor and in more ease than others; some in less, some almost without, except the one that he loves. So it is also with wisdom...).

As Ganze has argues, the sheer length of the addition is the first thing that readers know about the passage.¹⁰⁴ *Gesceadwisnes* begins by exhorting Agustinus, in a striking homiletic appeal, to *geðencan* (reflect upon) how men travel to pay tribute to their lord. The vivid description implicitly presents the *hlaford* (lord) as the hub or nexus to which all roads lead—while some

¹⁰³ R. J. Ganze, “The Individual in the Afterlife,” 30

¹⁰⁴ R. J. Ganze, “The Individual in the Afterlife,” 30.

men travel down an easy path or road (*weig*), others must travel long distances through very harsh or difficult circumstances (*swiðe earfoðferne*).

While the comparison of the *hlaford* to God is indeed commonplace, Ganze rightly asks the question: “Yet if this analogy is a common one, why did Alfred feel the need to expound upon it at such length?”¹⁰⁵ The addition of this passage leads readers through a series of stacked or successive interpretations: first, like the Preface, it links the attainment of wisdom to walking down a path, and directly compares the social hierarchies that men experience on earth with the relationship between God and mankind; second, it argues for a direct correlation between social standing, good works, and the *swiðe godne weig* (very good path), thereby justifying Anglo-Saxon hierarchical social structures; and third, despite these hierarchies, the detailed descriptions of men from all walks of life, from those who live in cottages to castles, nevertheless opens up Alfred’s translation to a diverse audience. What is particularly striking here is the emphasis Gesceadwisnes places on the multiplicity of *weigas* (ways). The constant repetition of phrases like *sume*, *cumað*, and *swiðe* hammers home for readers that, despite the differences in *ar* (honor) and social standing, all paths eventually lead to the same end.¹⁰⁶ Given the pointed nature of this metaphor and the way it rationalizes the Anglo-Saxon social structure, it is

¹⁰⁵ R.J. Ganze, “The Individual in the Afterlife,” 31.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Szarmach has observed that the repetition of *sum* here in the *Soliloquies* terms mirrors Old English poems like *The Gifts of Men*. See further: Paul Szarmach, “Augustine’s *Soliloquia* in Old English,” 241. I would also add that this *sum*-pattern can be found in wisdom poems like *The Wanderer* as well: “Ongietan sceal gleaw hæle hu gæstlic bið, þonne ealre þisse worulde wela weste stondeð, swa nu missenlice geond þisne middangeard winde biwaune weallas stondaþ, hrim bihrorene, hryðge þa ederas. Worlað þa winsalo, waldend licgað dreame bidrorene, duguþ eal gecrong, wlonc bi wealle. Sume wig fornom, ferede in forðwege, sumne fugel opbær ofer heanne holm, sumne se hara wulf deaðe gedælde, sumne dreorighleor in eorðscræfe eorl gehydde” (ll. 73-84) (A wise hero must understand how ghastly it will be, when all the wealth of the world lies in waste, as now in various places throughout middle-earth walls stand, blown by the wind, covered with frost, storm-swept the buildings. The halls decay, their lords lie deprived of joy, the whole troop has fallen, the proud ones, by the wall. Some were taken by war, carried on their way, some the bird bore off across the deep see, some the gray wolf shared with death, some the sad faced man buried in an early grave).

tempting to imagine Alfred's voice as here overtaking Agustinus' narrative voice within the dialogue. After all, what better metaphor for Alfred to use than one that directly links the king with God and wisdom—especially in a text that is sponsored by the royal court?

In her work on translation in the OE *Consolatio*, Nicole Guenther Discenza has argued that, in these departures from his original source texts, readers can see his attempts to both establish authority as author and king, and to shift the idea of the 'self' into the communal sphere.¹⁰⁷ That this metaphor highlights the social elements of the individual self, as many scholars have argued, is indicative that the Alfredian self is a revision of the private Augustinian *homo interior*. Eugene Greene, for example, has argued for this communal formation of the individual self, suggesting that Alfredian texts like the *Boethius* and the *Soliloquies* "seek to examine its place in the community and in the eternity of God's creation," while their use of personified Reason serves to "help the self to discover that its identity, both mortal and eternal, is communal."¹⁰⁸ Greene ultimately notes that the individual self for Alfred must always look outward to both Gesceadwisnes and his 'spiritual communities' rather than inward, as we see in Augustine's original *Soliloquia*.¹⁰⁹

While Greene and Discenza draw our attention to how Alfred connects the self and the material world, I suggest that he is not making a full turn outwards to the community; or rather, I argue that, for Alfred, knowledge of the self must always require a careful balance of inwardness and community. The metaphor does connect the development of the self with social strata, but the plethora of variable paths also indicates that each man and woman must find their own way

¹⁰⁷ Nicole Guenther Discenza, *King's English: The Strategies of Translation in the Old English Boethius* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 1-12.

¹⁰⁸ Eugene Green, "Speech Acts and the Question of the Self in Alfred's *Soliloquies*," in *Interdigitations: Essays for Irmengard Rauch*, eds. Gerald Carr, Wayne Herbert, and Lihua Chang, (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 211.

¹⁰⁹ Eugene Green, "Speech Acts and the Question of the Self in Alfred's *Soliloquies*," 215-216.

to the *hlaford* based on their individual circumstances. Moreover, it's important to remember that the dialogue itself is still taking place *within* the internal space of his mind. While it is easy to think of Gesceadwisnes as another character because of the dynamic nature of their conversation, the key function of the *Soliloquies* is that Gesceadwisnes does not exist outside of Agustinus' inner-consciousness, making the pair two sides of the same coin. So, while Alfred does frequently gesture outwards to the community and to the relevance of the material world in his search for wisdom, the search (at least within the parameters of the text) nevertheless remains firmly ensconced within the *ingebance*.

It is with this balance in mind that readers and scholars should examine Alfred's interest in the material world. As the two protagonists wend their way through the dialogue, for example, they spend a considerable amount of time analyzing the merits of friendship and community. Their discussion can be traced back to the Latin *Soliloquia*, where near the end of Book I Ratio asks Augustine to clarify his basic desires—namely, whether he still desires companionship, wealth, and honor, or whether he has spurned these in favor of knowing God. Augustine replies that he once coveted these earthly desires, but now (submissively tolerates) them only if they allow him to obtain greater wisdom.¹¹⁰ Ratio then explicitly asks why Augustine cares if his friends live at all, to which he responds: “Ut animas nostras et deum simul concorditer inquiramus. Ita enim facile, cui priori contingit inventio, ceteros eo sine labore perducit” (I.52) (So that we may together, with one mind, seek to know our souls and God. For in that way anyone who is the first to discover something can easily lead the others to that same point).¹¹¹ Ratio nevertheless pushes his stance and asks whether Augustine would hypothetically leave his

¹¹⁰ Augustine, *Soliloquia*, I. 45-51.

¹¹¹ Ratio asks: “Sed quaero abs te, cur eos homines, quos diligis, vel vivere vel tecum vivere cupias? (I.52) (But let me ask you this: why do you want those people whom you love to either live at all or to live with you?).

companions, clearly worried that he will fold to the pressures of friendship and impair his search for wisdom.¹¹² Augustine simply replies, “Fateor, ita est ut dicis” (I. 52) (I confess it is thus as you say). While he feels the need to lead others towards the right path, he will also *fugerem* (flee) from it if he must. For Augustine, friendship and community are key to his happiness on earth; and yet, he is ultimately ready to forgo this happiness if it hinders him from attaining what he truly desires: wisdom and salvation.

Although the Old English protagonists discuss friendship at length, they do not come to the same conclusions as their Latin counterparts. After getting Agustinus to confess that he loves his friends after God and his own reason, Gesceadwisnes goes one step farther by bluntly asking him: “hwig þu þa freond lufige swiðe, oððe hwæt þu on hym lufige, oððe hwæðer ðu hi for heon selfum lufige, þe for sumum oðrum þingum” (74) (why do you love your friends so much, or what do you love in them, or whether you love them for their own sake or for some other thing). Agustinus then replies (in an original OE addition to the dialogue) that he loves them “for freondscype and for geferædenne, an þa þeah ofer æalle oðre, þe me mæstne fultum doð to ongyttanne and to witanne gesceadwisnesse and wisdom, æalra mæst be gode and beo urum saulum. Forðam ic wot þæt ic mæg æð myd heora fultume æfter spurian þonne ic butan mæge” (74.14-18) (for friendship and companionship, and above all others, I love best those who help me to understand and know reason and wisdom, and most of all about god and about our souls. Because I know that I might more easily seek Him out with their help than without their help).

¹¹² Ratio asks: “Quid? Si te ab inquirendo etiam impediatur eorum praesentia, nonne laborabis atque optabis, si aliter esse non possunt, non tecum esse potius quam sic esse” (I.52) (But suppose their presence even holds you back from enquiry: will you not be bothered by this and wish that, if they cannot be otherwise, it would be better that they weren’t with you at all than be like this?). Throughout this conversation, Ratio relentlessly questions Augustine on his attachment to his friends, fearing that this attachment will ultimately sway him from the truth meditative path. Throughout this entire section, he immediately replies to each of Augustine’s assurances with a sharp “Quid?”

Moreover, in Book I, Gesceadwisnes orders him to gather “fæawa cuðe men and creftige mid þe, ðe nan wiht ne amyrdan, ac fultmoden to þinum crefte” (49.21-21) (a few wise and skillful men who would hinder you in no wise but give assistance to your ability). Whereas Ratio tells Augustine bluntly that he must write down their conversation without dictating to another person because their meditation “solitudinem meram desiderant” (I.22) (demands true solitude), Agustinus is ordered to gather a community of “cuðe men and creftige” (wise and skillful men) in order to craft his dialogue with Gesceadwisnes.¹¹³ This devotional process indicates that opening the meditative process can provide benefits for the individual devotee and the wider community. While the *cuðe men* will assist in writing the dialogue down so that it may be remembered, the dialogue itself will provide the community with a *weig* or script to practice meditation. Friendship is thus key for Agustinus to know both God and the soul, but only insofar as his community can help him uncover more about his own *ingebance*—perhaps either by writing his dialogues down, as we saw in the Preface, or by helping to sort through his reflective thoughts after he first engages with his own Gesceadwisnes.

What’s striking about the notion of friendship in the *Soliloquies* is that, when readers take these passages alongside the *hlaforde* metaphor above, Agustinus’ (or Alfred’s) conception of community seems to shift back and forth between the horizontal relationship of equal devotees searching out wisdom together, and between the vertical relationship of a lord and his servants.¹¹⁴ If this text did originate from Alfred or from his circle, the addition of the Alfredian

¹¹³ For Augustine in the *Soliloquia*, his place within the community depends on the Socratic teacher/student model in which he imparts wisdom to others who have yet to become enlightened. He states that his reasons for having a community around him is so that he who “first found out something could, without labor, easily impart it to the others.”

¹¹⁴ Szarmach has accordingly argued that this focus on friendship in the OE develops a “humanized Augustinian persona, which in turn supports the accessibility of the general Augustinian argument.” Paul Szarmach, “Augustine’s *Soliloquia* in Old English,” in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, Nicole Guenther Discenza, Paul Szarmach, eds. (Leiden: Brill,

voice and of Anglo-Saxon politics into Agustinus' dialogue, as Ganze argues, could signal that the translator does not seek to use a devotional text to consolidate kingly power, but instead, "to forge a kingdom that reflects the heavenly kingdom to the greatest degree possible in the City of Man."¹¹⁵ Unlike Augustine, who is solely concerned with knowing himself and salvation as an individual, Alfred's goals would seem to include the growth of the individual self alongside the growth of the nation. In this Alfredian worldview, the movement between public and private, individual and communal therefore makes sense—as king and devotee, the translation would necessarily seem to include an explanation of Anglo-Saxon social values alongside his script for understanding the *ingeþance*. After making these connections between the material world and Judgment Day, Agustinus turns his attention to the next logical step—namely, whether he will retain the knowledge that he gathered on earth and throughout his conversations with Gesceadwisnes in the afterlife. This is a concern that echoes throughout the entire *Soliloquies*, for he is frightened of losing his individuality (his experiences and his sense of kinship, duty) after death; the erasure of his personality would in turn result in a demotion, of sorts, in which he would be reduced to a static child-like state of innocence and knowledge.¹¹⁶

Keeping this fear in mind, and if we allow the above explanation of the speaker's shift between king and devotee to be true, Alfred's contentious Book III comes into clearer focus. As a completely original addition to Augustine's unfinished *Soliloquies*, Book III features a

2015), 246. In her work on translation in the OE *Consolatio*, Nicole Guenther Discenza has argued that in the many departures Alfred makes from the original *Soliloquies*, we see his attempts to establish authority as both an author and a king. As Alfred translates in the *Pastoral Care*, "se cræft ðæs lareowdomes bið cræft ealra cræfta" (25.17-18) (the craft of the teacher is the craft of all crafts). See further: Discenza, *King's English: The Strategies of Translation in the Old English Boethius*, 87-122.

¹¹⁵ R.J. Ganze, "The Individual in the Afterlife," 32.

¹¹⁶ Leslie Lockett discusses Agustinus' fear, alongside the immortality of the soul, extensively in her book, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies of the Self in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 313-373, at 29-32.

discussion of the one thing that Alfred needed to keep his world view in place—namely, that knowledge would continue and increase in the next world. Because the main concern of Book III is to parse the relationship between knowledge and the self after death, it acts as a microcosm of the inner and outer shifting that occurs throughout the entire *Soliloquies*. As Godden has observed, although Book III of the *Soliloquies* is written as a continuous sequence after Book II, it contains several places that are incoherent, and scholars have suggested that several sections are now missing.¹¹⁷ It begins on f. 54r in Cotton Vitellius A xv and picks up the dialogue where Book II left off.¹¹⁸ Agustinus opens his final section by reprimanding Gesceadwisnes for straying off-topic and not answering his questions:

“Nu þu hefst þa cwydas geendod þe þu of ðisum twam bocum alese, and næfst me gyt geandweard be ðam þe ic þe nu niehst acsode, þæt wæs, be minum gewitte. Ic þe acsode hwæðer hyt, æfter þæs lichaman gedale and þære sawle, weoxe, þe wanode, þe hyt ægðer dyde swa hyt hær dæð” (ll. 14-17)

(Now you have ended the sayings that you have chosen from these two books, and yet you have not answered me about what I asked you, that is, about my knowledge. I asked you whether it, after the body and soul are separated, would wax or wane, or whether it would do both as it had done before).

While in Augustine’s Latin text, he is interested in how the mind will understand or perceive (*intellegere*) after death, Agustinus in Book III is primarily concerned with his own personal store of knowledge (*gewitte*). He worries that if he loses access to his earthly memories and understanding, things like kinship, friendship, and sovereignty will no longer matter. Gesceadwisnes answers Agustinus by pointing him again towards *De Videndo Dei*, until we come across the Book’s first lacuna. In line 14 on f. 54r, Agustinus reiterates his desire to know about the *gewitte* after death by stating, “ac ic wolde þæt þu me...” (l. 20-21) (But I desire that

¹¹⁷ Malcolm Godden suggests that Book III of the *Soliloquies* needs to be rearranged. For a detailed explanation of how this rearrangement might progress, see further: Godden, “Text and Eschatology in Book III of the Old English *Soliloquies*,” *Anglia*, Vol 121 (2003): 177-209.

¹¹⁸ For a detailed description of these inconsistencies, see further: Malcolm Godden, “Text and Eschatology in Book III of the Old English *Soliloquies*,” 178-186.

you tell me...). Directly after this line, however, there is a break in the manuscript and the dialogue picks up abruptly with Gesceadwisnes describing the limitations of the *gewitte* in the corporeal world.

Agustinus despairs at the beginning of Book III that “þæt mod is mid þam lichaman gehefegod and abysgod, þæt we ne magon myd þæs modes ealum nan þing geseon swylc swilc hyt is” (92-93) (the mind is weighed down and aggravated with the body, so that we cannot see anything with the mind’s eye just as it is).¹¹⁹ Gesceadwisnes is nevertheless quick to promise that mankind’s “gewit weorðe myd þi swiðe miclum geæced” (94) (knowledge will be very much increased) after death, and increased yet again after Judgment Day. Harkening back to Agustinus’ desire to retain individual experiences and memories after death, she emphatically argues that each man will attain the knowledge that they have earned on earth. She thus assures him that “ælc hefð be þam andefnum þe he ær æfter æarnað; swa ær he hæf swiðor swincð and swiðor giornð wisdomes and rihtwisnesse” (94) (each man will possess according to his own merit, that which he earned before; just as before he worked hard here and eagerly yearned for wisdom and righteousness). The desire for just compensation is palpable, for Agustinus worries that his reward will not be commensurate with his good works. The fact that Gesceadwisnes hurries to reassure him again indicates the OE translation’s concern with establishing a direct connection between the material and spiritual world. It’s also worth repeating here that his desire to maintain his individuality even after death reinforces the *Soliloquies*’ larger focus on developing the individual’s knowledge of the *ingebance* (inner-consciousness). The community is still clearly important for Agustinus’, whose last question in the dialogue concerns whether he

¹¹⁹ Godden suggests that Book III of the *Soliloquies* needs to be rearranged based on specific disjunctures in text as well as the dislocation of some leaves within the manuscript. He suggests that the order should be emended to: A (f. 54r2-14), D (ff.56v13-59r11), C (ff. 55v7-56v13), B (ff. 54r14-55v7), and E (ff.59r11-59v18). For a full explanation of this order, see further: Malcolm Godden, “Text and Eschatology in Book III of the Old English *Soliloquies*,” 179-188.

will remember his friends after death;¹²⁰ and yet, for Agustinus and Alfred, if the individual self dissolves in the afterlife so that each devotee is reduced to what Locket calls the same “state of childlike knowledge and self-awareness,” the self-care that they performed on earth would seem to lose much of its meaning.

It is after this assurance that individual experience transcends death that readers encounter one of the most debated passages of the *Soliloquies*. When Gesceadwisnes explains that the wicked will see God just as the blessed will see Him after death, the text states, “a answarode he is an agnum ingeþancum and cwæð” (p. 94, l. 4). As Carnicelli and Godden have both observed, grammar and meaning of this sentence is unclear—in his edition, both scholars accordingly amend it to “Pa answarede he an his agnum ingeþancum and cwæð” (Then he answered in his own inner-consciousness and said).¹²¹ At this point in the narrative, readers become uncertain to whom the *he* refers, for even though Gesceadwisnes should be the one answering the question, up until now her character has always been referred to as *heo* (she). Carnicelli merely offers in explanation, “The dialogue form has been abandoned here, and there is no further attempt to maintain it.”¹²² Godden, meanwhile, has suggested two more possibilities: first, that the translator has redefined the nature of the dialogue itself from a previous (now lost) section in which Augustine is now addressing his inner-self; and second, that the translator might here be forgetfully identifying the authority figure as the masculine Wisdom rather than the feminine Gesceadwisnes. He draws our attention to moments in *Boethius* when

¹²⁰ The text is broken here, but scholars believe this is the last question from Agustinus to Gesceadwisnes before the dialogue ceases: “...meahte oððe mosten on þas wurlde, oððe hweðer hy enige geminde hefde þara freonda þe hi beæftan heom lefdon on þissum weorulde” (95) (might or could in this world, or whether they had any memories of the friends whom they had left behind in this world). See further: Malcolm Godden, “Text and Eschatology in Book III of the Old English *Soliloquies*,” 184-185; Thomas A. Carnicelli, *King Alfred's Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies*, 95, n. 4.

¹²¹ Malcolm Godden, “Text and Eschatology in Book III of the Old English *Soliloquies*,” 185.

¹²² Thomas A. Carnicelli, *King Alfred's Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies*, 95, n. 4.

the translator similarly switches between *he* and *heo*, as well as similar phrasing when Wisdom is said to think “on his modes ingeþance” (52) (on his mind’s inner-consciousness) before answering a question.¹²³

Although Godden ultimately suggests that Book III retains the dialogue format despite this momentary pronoun confusion, I instead follow Ruth Waterhouse in arguing that the dialogue ceases at this point and the voices of Gesceadwisnes and Agustinus are fully joined into one character.¹²⁴ This unification is marked by a shift in tone from dialogue to exhortation—the passage that follows the questionable “þa answarode he an his agnum ingeþancum” clause is riddled with homiletic characteristics, such as: appeals to the audience in first person (“Nu we magon gehyran” (95) (Now that we can hear)) and the use of analogies to explain doctrinal practice (“swa swa sum rice man on þisse weorulde hym habbe hys deorlinga sumne fram adrifen” (96) (Just as some powerful man may have driven one of his dear ones from himself...)). The breakdown of the dialogue, along with the speaker’s emphatic use of ‘ic’ instead of the typical ‘we’ at the very end of Book III, reminds readers one last time that the text is indeed a soliloquy rather than a traditional dialogue between two characters. It is easy to imagine while reading that Gesceadwisnes and Agustinus are two distinct individuals on a journey for knowledge—the unification of their voices here nevertheless highlights that the entire text occurs within one psyche, and within the inner-chamber of the mind.

¹²³ Godden, “Text and Eschatology in Book III of the Old English *Soliloquies*,” 186. For this edition of the OE Boethius, see: *King Alfred’s Old English Version of Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae*, W. J. Sedgefield, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1899).

¹²⁴ Ruth Waterhouse similarly ends her work on narrative tone in the *Soliloquies* by suggesting that the translator as Alfred casts off the dialogue in order to preach good behavior within this lifetime to his followers. Waterhouse, “Tone in Alfred’s Version of Augustine’s *Soliloquies*,” 81, note 5.

Conclusion:

While each of my case studies in this dissertation incite medieval readers to gain wisdom and to ultimately find salvation by delving into the *ingebance*, Agustinus' dialogue in the *Soliloquies* perhaps best represents the delicate balance between the individual and the community in Anglo-Saxon England. If the *Soliloquies* translation was indeed created by Alfred or his circle, the fact that the internal dialogue is broken up by references to social hierarchies and kingship makes perfect sense. As a devotional text, its goal is to teach the *ic*-speaker (and the reader by transitive property) how to acquire knowledge of God and the self. As a translation that was potentially drafted within a royal court, the secondary goal would be to reaffirm the validity of the king's rule and of Anglo-Saxon hierarchical culture. In any case, regardless of specific authorship, the text scripts the construction of a distinctly Anglo-Saxon 'self' that prizes both communal support and interiority. It is notably the soliloquy form that provides Agustinus and the reader with a method for exploring and untangling this complicated dichotomy. And unlike oral Socratic dialogues, or the oral arguments that Augustine made at Cassiciacum, the soliloquy occurs entirely within the individual mind, providing both the translator and the reader with an 'inner chamber' to perform this dialogue without fear or shame. For both Agustinus and the medieval reader, it is the process of staging the dialogue on the stage of the mind, all while reenacting the narrative's questions and answers, that makes the *Soliloquies* devotionally productive.

CHAPTER TWO:

Mind Games: Performing Virtue and Vice in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*

While in chapter one I discussed the ways in which Alfred's translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies* relies on dialogue to both instruct and move medieval readers, this chapter examines the dynamic interaction between narrative and manuscript illumination in two extant illustrated Anglo-Saxon copies of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*.¹ The reception of Prudentius in Anglo-Saxon England has been a continued topic of interest for medieval scholars. Gernot Wieland, for example, has concentrated on the textual tradition of *Psychomachia* in detail, while other scholars have sought to trace the provenance of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript illuminations.² The poem's lasting popularity in the Middle Ages and beyond, I argue, is based in part on the way in which Prudentius is able to knit together visual and verbal experience. Within the poem, Prudentius weaves together a series of graphic, poignant battles between personified Virtues and Vices that draw the reader to both re-imagine each scene and commit the images to memory. The addition of the illustrations in the Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* manuscript tradition underscores the continued importance of visual imagery within the poem, for each of the illustrated copies

¹ In this chapter, the text and the translation of the *Psychomachia* are cited from: Prudentius, *Psychomachia*. ed. and trans. H.J. Thomson, *Loeb Classical Library 387, Prudentius Volume I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949). Thank you to the Cornell Graduate School for funding a trip to see the illustrated Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* manuscripts at the British Library and at the Cambridge Corpus Christi College Library. From their generous funding, I was able to collect data from these two manuscripts, and also pay for black and white scans of the manuscripts' facsimiles.

² See further: Gernot Wieland. "The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*." *Anglo-Saxon England* 16 (1987), 213-31. R. Stettiner, *Die illustrierten Prudentiushandschriften*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1895-1905). H. Woodruff. "The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*," *Art Studies: Medieval, Renaissance and Modern* 7 (1929), 33-79; Eric Winstedt, "Notes on the Manuscripts of Prudentius," *The Journal of Philology* 29 (1904): 166-180; Macklin Smith in *Prudentius' Psychomachia: A Reexamination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), examines the relationship between pagan authors of Antiquity and Prudentius' Christian allegory.

seem to be derived from the same early prototype that began in France and came to England in the late 8th century. As Wieland and Helen Woodruff have observed, the content and placing of the illustrations remain consistent throughout every extant illustrated Anglo-Saxon copy—this consistency in turn underscores the importance of visuality to both the dissemination and the interpretation of the poem.³

In this chapter, I am accordingly concerned with the relationship between word and image in the Anglo-Saxon illustrated *Psychomachia* manuscripts—specifically, how the poem’s use of word and image produces a replicable path or way for medieval readers to walk in their daily devotion. I begin contextualizing the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and the *Psychomachean* tradition, before analyzing both the setting and the temporality of the poem itself. I then examine how the visceral ekphrastic battle descriptions and the juxtaposition of word and image on the manuscript page affects the way medieval readers experience the devotional narrative. As we will see below, the illusion of depth in the illustrations pulls readers into the image frame, while the captions draw the reader again outwards and back to the main text of the poem. This movement in turn creates a dynamic back-and-forth between image and text that serves to heighten the reader’s experience of the narrative and allow them to better visualize the scene on the stage of the mind. The *Psychomachia*’s lack of concrete setting ultimately invites readers to substitute their own *psyche* for the poem’s setting, and use the poem itself as a template for devotion and prayer. Aided by the corresponding illustrations in the Old English manuscripts, this universality allows readers to see the poem as a type of proto-morality play, in which the personified Virtues and Vices become players on the mind’s stage. In essence, the poem causes the same type of effect as an ‘everyman’ character, which encourages each reader to imagine him

³ Gernot Wieland, “The Origins and Development of the Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* Illustrations,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 26 (1997), 169-174. See also: H. Woodruff, “The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius’ *Psychomachia*,” 36-40, 50-51.

or herself as the central protagonist. Readers are thus called to use the *Psychomachia* to both reimagine and reenact the struggle between Virtue and Vice that is always raging within their own souls.

Manuscript Context and Traditions:

The *Psychomachia* was originally written by the Spanish poet Prudentius in the early fifth century. Although he initially practiced law with some success, he eventually retired from public life to become an ascetic, at which time he wrote devotional poetry, hymns, and Catholic *apologia*. He was influenced by a wide range of early authors, including early Christian writers such as Tertullian and St. Ambrose, and classic Hellenic writers such as Vergil and Homer.⁴ As Jeffrey Henderson suggests, Prudentius does not reject classical Greek and Latin authors as merely pagans, but instead views them as the inheritance of Christian Rome. We see this influence best in the *Psychomachia* which, with the image of Christian Virtue as a ruthless battle-hardened soldier, spiritualizes and elaborates on the heroic epic and inner psychological conflict.⁵ By using and integrating classic poetics, lyric, and epic into his own writing, Prudentius demonstrates how Christian subject matter can fit into classical molds.

Historically, the poem has interested literary scholars for two major reasons: first, it is the earliest example that we have of an extended allegorical poem, and second, it contains a diverse

⁴ Martha Malamud, in her study of Classical mythology in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, states: "We must not think of [late Antique poets] as poets engaged in an attempt to revive, imitate, or attack pagan literary culture. They wrote, from their point of view, from firmly within a highly developed and articulated literary tradition that stretched back to Homer, and they had the luxury of knowing that, because of the remarkable homogeneity of education in the ancient world, their audience was as steeped in that literature as they were." See further: Martha Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation: Prudentius and Classical Mythology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 4.

⁵ Jeffrey Henderson, ed. "Introduction." *Prudentius Vol. 1*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), viii.

range of brutal punishments and graphic violence. The poem contains three distinct sections: the prologue, the battles between Virtue and Vice, and the final scene in which Prudentius halts the dialogic allegory and turns once more to his readers. The series of gladiatorial battles, which take up the majority of the narrative, revolve around seven distinct altercations in which one personified Virtue squares off against one personified Vice, with the ultimate prize of mankind's soul and salvation. The pairings include Faith and Worship-of-the-Old-Gods; Chastity and Lust; Patience and Wrath, Humility and Pride; Sobriety and Luxury; Good Works and Avarice; and Concord and Discord. Each of the seven battles ends badly for the Vices, whom the Virtues systematically slaughter with very little effort in a myriad of gruesome ways.

The *Psychomachia* enjoyed immense popularity during the later Anglo-Saxon period, evident in the survival of four illustrated and six non-illustrated manuscripts that were either written or owned in England.⁶ It was one of the earliest non-liturgical texts to reach England from the Continent,⁷ and its influence on Anglo-Latin and Old English literature has been widely studied.⁸ The charts in Table 2.1 and 2.2 display the extant *Psychomachia* copies that were

⁶ This number was taken from Helmut Gneuss's and Michael Lapidge's *A Bibliographic Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014). See also: Helmut Gneuss, "A Preliminary List of Manuscripts written or owned in England up to 1100," *Anglo-Saxon England* 9 (1981): 1-60. And Wieland's study in "The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*," 214-221.

⁷ Gernot Wieland, "The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*," 214.

⁸ While Prudentius' *Psychomachia* is a source for many Anglo-Saxon authors, including Aldhelm, Alcuin, Bede, Wynfrith-Boniface, Byrhtferth of Ramsey, we lack concrete evidence on exactly how the poem was disseminated throughout England from the Continent. Wieland suggests that the Anglo-Saxon copies might have come over with those Latin scholars whom sought to join his court and begin his translation program—perhaps either by Grimbold or John the Saxon (173-174). In his work to uncover how Latin source texts were disseminated throughout Anglo-Saxon England, Lapidge turns to the library records from the abbey at Ramsey in southeast England for answers, founded in 966 by Oswald, the archbishop of York and Æthelwine, the ealdorman of East Anglia (120). In the 980's, Abbo of Fleury spent two years at Ramsey and brought with him a wide range of books to instruct young English monks. His student, Byrthferth of Ramsey (c. 970-1020), compiled a commonplace book of quotations, and

written or owned in England.⁹ Though no copies survive earlier than the tenth century that were created in England, Wieland has suggested that there is evidence the text was already on the island by the 7th century because Aldhelm references it within his *Carmen de virginitate*.¹⁰ Bede

Table 2.1 Non-Illustrated Anglo-Saxon Prudentius Manuscripts:

Manuscript Shelfmark	Manuscript Provenance	Glosses
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C. 967	Late 9 th century—written in northeastern France and later owned at Bury St. Edmunds	None
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 223	9-10 th century—written at Saint-Bertin and taken to England by the tenth century.	Latin and Old English
Cambridge, Trinity College O.2.51	10 th century—unknown origin and provenance.	Latin
Durham, Cathedral Library B.IV.9	10 th century—unknown origin and provenance.	Latin
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F.3.6	Early 11 th century—written in Exeter.	Latin and Old English
Cambridge, University Library, Gg. 5.35	Mid 11 th century—written and owned at St. Augustine's, Canterbury.	Latin and Old English

through this text, we can now reconstruct the Latinate sources that were available in the Ramsey library. Both Abbo and Byrthferth were intimately aware of Prudentius' *Psychomachia* and the *Liber Cathemerinon*, along with a wide range of classical and patristic sources (123-124). This evidence confirms that Prudentius' *Psychomachia* was most often used as a teaching tool for learning Latin. See further: Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63-127; 133-174. See also: Gernot Wieland, "The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*," 173-175; Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England Up to 1100* (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 241; Tempe, Arizona, 2001); Helmut Gneuss, "King Alfred and the History of Anglo-Saxon Libraries," *Books and Libraries in Early England*, no. III (Aldershot, 1996). See also: N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957).

⁹ The following charts were distilled from Wieland's article on the Anglo-Saxon illustrated *Psychomachia* manuscripts. See further: Wieland, "The Origin and Development of the Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* illustrations," 170.

¹⁰ Gernot Wieland, "The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*," 214.

Table 2.2 Illustrated Anglo-Saxon Prudentius Manuscripts:

Manuscript Shelfmark	Manuscript Provenance	Glosses
Cambridge Corpus Christi College 23	Late 10 th century—written in England, possibly at Christ Church, Canterbury and later owned at Malmesbury.	Latin and Old English
London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra C. viii	Late 10 th century—written and owned at Christ Church, Canterbury.	Latin and Old English
London, British Library, Additional 24199	Late 10 th century—unknown in origin, but later owned at Bury St. Edmunds.	Latin
Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 29336/1 (formerly Clm. 29031b.)	Early 11 th century—unknown origin and provenance.	Latin and Old English

also later mentions the poem in his *De arte metrica* in the 8th century. As the charts below show, the earliest extant copies were written in northern France in the 9th century and brought to England in the late 9th or early 10th century. The English nevertheless began creating their own versions during the tenth century, and scholars have tentatively associated the earliest copies with the reign of Alfred the Great.¹¹ Wieland observes that the other texts bound alongside the *Psychomachia* in these ten surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts rarely demonstrate any obvious design or purpose, with the exception of two—CUL Gg 5-35 was intended as an anthology for the classroom, and Rawlinson C 697 places the *Psychomachia* alongside Aldhelm's *Carmen de virginitate* to produce a thematic focus on military *figura*.

It is the illustrated manuscript tradition that will be my primary focus within this chapter. These four manuscripts are notably all English in origin, and although we know their

¹¹ All four of the extant illustrated copies of the *Psychomachia* in Anglo-Saxon England were created in England. For more on manuscript provenance and context: Gernot Wieland, "The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*," 214.

prototype(s) were imported from the Continent, no exemplars survive.¹² Of the four extant copies, the fragmentary Munich manuscript contains only one folio and three illustrations. The illustrations in BL Add. 24199 also remain incomplete; although there are spaces for illustrations to be added, the manuscript's 61 images only occur up until Good Works defeats Avarice. With eighty-three illustrations, Cotton Cleopatra C viii would be complete except for the missing lines from 705-45 (along with 7 missing illustrations), which encompass the end of Concord and Discord's battle and the final gathering that Concord and Faith assemble after their victory. CCCC 23, on the other hand, is the only Anglo-Saxon copy that contains a nearly complete image cycle with 89 out of the possible 90 illustrations present. Wieland, Stettiner, and Woodruff have split these illustrated manuscripts into two groups—with CCCC 23 and Add. 24199 in Group A, and Cleopatra C viii and Clm 29336 in Group B. The criteria for these groups is based on shared pictorial features like dress and drapery, as well as the identical grouping of figures within several illustrations.¹³

Perhaps most importantly, the illustrated manuscripts are excellent case studies for examining the relationship between image and text because in addition to containing a wide range of illustrations, they also include ample Latin and Old English glosses and captions.¹⁴

¹² See further: R. Stettiner, *Die Illustrierten-Handschriften* (Berlin, 1905), 31-32; 49-66; Gernot Wieland, "The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*," 213-231; Gernot Wieland, "The origin and development of the Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* illustrations," 269-173; Helen Woodruff, "The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius," 33-79, at 50-51.

¹³ Woodruff argues that these manuscripts were created by one exemplar, whereas Wieland argues for two exemplars. See further: Woodruff, "The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius," 50. Wieland, "The origin and development of the Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* illustration," 177-182; R. Stettiner, *Die Illustrierten-Handschriften* (Berlin, 1905), 31-32.

¹⁴ Nine of the ten Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* manuscripts contain Latin glosses—these include: BL Add. 24199; CCCC 23; CCCC 223; Auct. F. 3.6; Durham B iv.9; CUL Gg. 5.35; Cleopatra C viii; TCC O.2.51; and Clm. 29031b. Of these nine, six manuscripts also contain Old English glosses, including: CCCC 23; CCCC 223; Auct. F. 3.6; CUL Gg. 5.35; Cleopatra C viii; and Clm. 29031b. For more on the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition, see: Gernot Wieland, "The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of Prudentius' '*Psychomachia*,'" 213-231.

While other Prudentius manuscripts and gloss traditions, such as the Weitz tradition, have been extensively studied for their illustrations and glosses (lexical, grammatical, and interpretive), there has only been a handful of full-length articles written on the English manuscript tradition.¹⁵ Because research on the Latin and Old English *Psychomachia* glosses often emphasizes their function as teaching tools and curricular texts, scholarship has remained chiefly linguistic and lexicographic.¹⁶ Even Wieland, who created a categorical system that is fundamental to the study of these glosses, focused on deciphering how the glosses affect readers' understanding of the text's literal meaning.¹⁷ In his work on the *Psychomachia* in Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.5.35, for example, he discusses in detail how glosses can be used to learn vocabulary, to avoid misreadings, to study grammar, and to explain difficult words.¹⁸ He goes on to suggest that glossators' work "consists in making the readers understand the poem at a literal level... On occasion they [the glosses on Prudentius and Arator], are interpreted with the techniques of biblical exegesis, but numerical evidence regulates interpretive glosses to a place of minor importance."¹⁹

¹⁵ As Wieland notes, the relationship between Latin and Old English can be further mined from the glosses. Gernot Wieland, "The Relationship of Latin to Old English Glosses in the *Psychomachia* of Cotton Cleopatra C viii," in *Mittelalterliche Volkssprachige Glossen: Internationale Fachkonferenz des Zentrums für Mittelalterliche der Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg 2. Bis 4 August 1999*. Rolf Bergmann, Elvira Galser, Claudine Moulin-Fankhänel, eds., Germanistische Bibliothek 13 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Verlag, 2001), 175-188, at 176; R. Stettiner, *Die Illustrierten-Handschriften*, 31-32; 49-66. For an excellent study on gender and the body in CCC 23, see further: Catherine Karkov, "Broken bodies and singing tongues: gender and voice in the Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 23 *Psychomachia*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 115-136.

¹⁶ See further: Sinead O'Sullivan, *Early Medieval Glosses on Prudentius' Psychomachia: The Weitz Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 80-81.

¹⁷ See further: Sinead O'Sullivan, *Early Medieval Glosses*, 80-81.

¹⁸ Gernot Wieland, *The Latin Glosses on Arator and Prudentius in Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.5.35, Studies in Texts* 61 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983).

¹⁹ Wieland, "The Latin Glosses on Arator and Prudentius," 147; 191. See also, his article on "Latin Lemma—Latin Gloss: The Stepchild of Glossologists," *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch* 19

Although Wieland has suggested that the Anglo-Saxon illustrated *Psychomachia* manuscripts were probably ecclesiastical classbooks based on the didactic nature of the glosses, scholars like Michael Lapidge have nevertheless cautioned against assuming that glosses point to classroom use.²⁰ Lapidge suggests that the identical glosses in several *Psychomachia* copies could point to the glosses being copied along with the text, or from a specific commentary tradition.²¹ He accordingly suggests that we call the glossed *Psychomachia* manuscripts ‘library books’ rather than ‘classbooks’, for they were most likely used for private reading by monks with a monastery setting.²² In her work on the Weitz manuscript tradition, Sinead O’Sullivan suggests that Wieland and Lapidge’s debate over terminology (classbook or library book) complicates matters unnecessarily.²³ She goes on to observe that “as recipients of instruction both the classroom student and the reader were *in statu pupillari* (in the state of being a pupil).”²⁴ It is challenging, if not impossible, to definitively prove classroom usage in many instances, but regardless of whether the *Psychomachia* manuscripts were used in a classroom or in private,

(1984), 91-9. He argues that Arator’s work was studied more for grammar and lexicon, while Prudentius was studied for allegorical and anagogical meanings. His book length study of these authors is nevertheless primarily devoted to studying the glosses in relationship to the literal meaning of the text.

²⁰ Michael Lapidge, “The Study of Latin Texts in late Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence of Latin Glosses,” *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. Nicholas Brooks (Leicester, 1982), pp. 99-140. Wieland argues that the first extant Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* manuscripts could have been imported into England during Alfred’s reign c. 899 or just after during the Benedictine reform c. 940. Wieland stresses that the illustrations were not sent to Alcuin through York or Winchester, but instead probably came from France. Woodruff argues that there is most likely a single exemplar for the Anglo-Saxon illustrations manuscripts, but Wieland argues for multiple (now-lost) exemplars. Wieland splits the four illustrated manuscripts into two distinct groups (A and B), based on differences between both the image and the gloss traditions. See further: Gernot Wieland, “The Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* Illustrations,” 173-180; Gernot Wieland, “The Glossed Manuscript: Classbook or library book?” *Anglo-Saxon England* 14 (1985): 153-173. See also: Helen Woodruff, “The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius,” *Art Studies: Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern* 7 (1929), 50.

²¹ Michael Lapidge, “The Study of Latin Texts in late Anglo-Saxon England,” 99-140.

²² Michael Lapidge, “The Study of Latin Texts in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” 104.

²³ Sinead O’Sullivan, *Early Medieval Glosses*, 82-84.

²⁴ Sinead O’Sullivan, *Early Medieval Glosses*, 84.

their glosses could perform the same function as a reading aid. As O’Sullivan goes on to argue, the fact that glosses were not produced in the monastery where the manuscript was found does not rule out that they were used as pedagogical tools.²⁵ Similarly, the *quare hoc*, syntactical, and accentual glosses does restrict the manuscripts to classroom usage.²⁶ What we do know from the glosses, as O’Sullivan suggests, is that they reveal the ways in which this text was read and interpreted as it passed from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages.²⁷ All glosses—regardless of whether they were read in class or in private—illustrate the way a text was read within specific historical periods.

While there has been minimal study on the gloss tradition as noted above, there has been no sustained research in literary studies on the captions and their relationship to the illustrations and the Latin poem. In the Anglo-Saxon illustrated manuscripts, each image is paired with a Latin caption, which has been subsequently translated into Old English. As we’ll see later in this chapter, the way that some of the *Psychomachia* captions cause readers to pause, linger on a single point, go on a tangent, or further highlight a scene seems just as useful in a private reading setting as in a classroom setting. The manuscript captions combine with the text and illustrations to guide readers through a type of *lectio divina* in which they read, meditate, and contemplate the morality of the poem. I will thus focus my analysis on the relationship between illustration, corresponding Latin and Old English caption, and the graphic space of the page. I will primarily examine Cleopatra C viii, with occasional reference to CCCC 23, both because these are the most complete extant illustrated copies with the most extensive Latin and Old English captions, and because they are respectively representative of Groups A and B. I argue that the integration

²⁵ Sinead O’Sullivan, *Early Medieval Glosses*, 84-85.

²⁶ Sinead O’Sullivan, *Early Medieval Glosses*, 84-85

²⁷ Sinead O’Sullivan, *Early Medieval Glosses*, 85.

of illustration, caption, and poem works to reveal the underlying meaning of the text and provide a replicable script for Anglo-Saxon readers to follow as they read and re-enact the narrative.

Setting and Temporality:

As an entry point into the *Psychomachia*, I turn first to the poem's title. The *Psychomachia* is a battle (or, *machia*) somehow involving the soul (or, *psyche*)—but the Greek title proves difficult to fully parse. In most modern editions, the title remains untranslated, which as Brenda Machosky suggests, is most preferable.²⁸ Both Christian Gnilka and Macklin Smith discuss possible variations in translating “psyche,” including “in the soul,” “on behalf of the soul,” and “of the soul.”²⁹ Machosky goes on to argue that Prudentius uses the word *psyche* as a translation for both “animus,” the masculine term that refers to intellect and the rational mind, and “anima,” the feminine term that refers to the spirit which is given to mankind by God.³⁰ The exact translation notwithstanding, what is clear upon reading the poem is that the title's ambiguity is sustained throughout—the poem's setting is unclear, as a battle for the soul that also somehow occurs within the soul. Neither time nor space are not marked in the poem; as Machosky observes, this is not a metaphysical poem and there is no movement from heaven and

²⁸ Brenda Machosky, “The Face that is not a Face: The Phenomenology of the Soul in the Allegory of the Psychomachia,” *Exemplaria* Vol. 15, Iss. 1 (2003): 3-4. Thompson translated the title to “The Fight for Mansoul” in the Loeb edition, yet as Machosky notes, this translation seems to flatten out the relationship between battle and soul. S. Georgia Nugent (in her book *Allegory and Poetics: The Structure and Imagery of Prudentius' Psychomachia* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985), provides an in-depth examination of this compound and its relationship to allegory.

²⁹ Macklin Smith, *Prudentius' Psychomachia: A Reexamination*, 113. See also: Christian Gnilka, “Studien zur Psychomachie des Prudentius,” *Klassische-Philologische Studien* 27 (Weisbaden, 1963).

³⁰ Brenda Machosky, “The Face that is not a Face,” 4.

earth, or sensible to divine.³¹ Instead, the events seem to occur simultaneously in a temporal loop, marking the soul as an elusive force that does not occur within time and space.

Prudentius is thus able successfully to represent through his use of battle allegory that which cannot be seen or felt. Most importantly, the ambiguity surrounding the poem's setting and temporality also turns the *psyche* (as made up of *animus* and *anima*) into a productive archetype that applies universally to every human soul.³² The *Psychomachia* thus asks readers to reflect on man's soul as an idea, battling continually against sin while mired in corporeal existence; it also encourages readers to navigate the gap in setting and temporality by substituting their own specific soul as the key battleground in the fight to erase sin from the mind. Smith notices this division when she highlights the conflicted nature of the soul always at war: "Since *psyche* means both 'soul' and 'life', a *psychomachia* can be a soul's struggle for eternal life as well as a soul's struggle in this world for the clarity of Christian self-perfection."³³ In essence, the poem causes the same type of effect as an 'everyman' character, which

³¹ Brenda Machosky, "The Face that is not a Face," 5-6.

³² Carl Jung's definition of 'archetype' can be helpful here, which states that archetypes were models of people, behaviors, and personalities. He believed that universal archetypes rest within the collective unconscious of mankind, built from our communal experience of the world. When there was disunity between the personal subconscious of an individual and the collective consciousness, internal conflicts could be created which would influence personality and the curation of a 'self'. Using this framework, it's useful to think of medieval scripts as types of archetype, which in turn act as models for individual behavior and devotional practice in the Middle Ages. These archetypes which are often drawn from things like mythology, literature, and doctrine, provide individuals with tools to learn about the self and the *psyche*. According to Jung, the medieval period generated a wide variety of archetypes based on Classical ontology and biblical theology that ultimately allowed individuals to develop productive behavioral patterns. See further: Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R.F.C Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969). See also: Charlotte Spivak and Christine Herold, eds., *Archetypal Readings of Medieval Literature* in *Studies of Mediaeval Literature*, no. 22 (Lewiston: Mellen, 2002); Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Carl Jung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. Chapters 3-4, pp. 57-77.

³³ Macklin Smith, *Prudentius' Psychomachia*, 114.

encourages readers through the generic nature of the character to imagine themselves as the central protagonist. Aided by the corresponding illustrations in the Old English manuscripts, this universality allows readers to see the poem as a type of proto-morality play, in which the personified Virtues and Vices become players on the mind's stage. If readers substitute their own souls or *psyches* for the poem's setting, then they can use the poem's scripted scenes to perform and play out the excision of bodily desires.

From the very first lines of the *Psychomachia*, the poem is characterized as a model or script for the reader's life—a script, it should be noted, that hinges on the performance of violence against sin. Readers must pick their way through levels of interpretation to both locate the right path and follow it to devotional productivity. Like the image above, the text of the *Praefatio* begins with Abraham as the *primum exemplum* (first example) to show mankind the way to God:

“Senex fidelis prima credendi via Abram...
pugnare nosmet cum profanis gentibus suasit...
quam strage multa bellicosus spiritus
portenta cordis servientis vicerit...” (ll. 1-2; 9-10; 13-14).

(The faithful patriarch Abram is a guiding way of belief... he has counseled us to war against the ungodly clans... till that spirit, battling valorously, has overcome with great slaughter the monsters in the enslaved heart).

Here, he explicitly tells readers how to experience and interpret his ensuing poem based on Abraham's teaching, who 'prima credendi via' (first showed the way) to mankind. The *Praefatio* begins by interpreting Abraham's history as the first patriarch: 'senile pignus qui dicavit victimae,/ docens ad aram cum litare quis velit,/ quod dulce cordi, quod pium, quod unicum/ Deo libenter offerendum credito' (ll. 5-14) (he who offered in sacrifice the child of his old age, teaching us thereby that when a man would make an acceptable offering at the altar he must willingly and with faith in God offer to Him that which is dear to his heart and the object of his

love...). In this retelling, Abraham's success is due to his unquestioning faith, which makes his offering acceptable in the eyes of God. While we might immediately assume that the poem would fully recount the story of Isaac's sacrifice, focusing on the patriarch's unhesitating faith, Prudentius only makes a short mention of this great trial before moving to dramatize the theme of slavery and Abraham's daring rescue of Lot.

Upon hearing that his nephew Lot was captured by the wicked kings of Sodom and Gomorra, Abraham takes 318 of his servants in order to rescue his kin. The turn here to war might not seem surprising in a poem that details the gruesome results of battle, but the *Praefatio* does more than portray Abraham as faithful and obedient servant of God. It also underscores how unquestioning faith is only one piece of the devotional puzzle, rather than the ultimate guarantor of salvation—while faith opens the door for Christ who ‘parvam pudici cordis intrabit casam,/ montrans honorem Trinitatis hospitae’ (ll. 62-3) (will enter the humble abode of the pure heart and give it the privilege of entertaining the Trinity), remaining vigilant and actively rooting out vice just as necessary for freeing the enslaved heart from corporeal “libidini” (desires). By following the logic of Prudentius’ framing, readers understand two things: just as Abraham frees Lot from the wicked kings, so too do the Virtues fight to release the soul from corporeal enslavement—and like the Virtues who jump into the fray against sin, so too should readers themselves actively participate in devotion by systematically wiping out Vice within themselves. Prudentius accordingly suggests that it was Abraham’s well-fought battle for Lot that allowed Sara to conceive Isaac: “adhuc recentem caede de tanta virum/ donat sacerdos ferculis caelestibus,/...mox et triformis angelorum trinitas/ senis revisat hospitis mapalia,/ et iam vietam Sarra in album fertilis/ munus ieventae mater exsanguis stupet...” (ll. 38-9; 45-8) (to the warrior fresh from this great slaughter the priest presents heavenly food...then also a triad of angels in

the form of three persons visits the old man's cabin, and Sara, conceiving, is amazed to find the function of youth come to her old womb). Here, Prudentius draws a causal link between Abraham's glory in battle and Isaac's conception—Abraham comes home from war triumphant, is given heavenly food from the mysterious Melchisedec, and is finally visited by three angels who secure his lineage through Sara. It is thus only after a hard-won battle that the soul, who has “long been childless,” may become worthy of the ‘eternal seed’.

This prioritizing of war and domination sets the tone for the rest of the poem. Prudentius is certainly not the first to use war metaphors to describe devotion and the difficult path to salvation. As Smith suggests, Prudentius is here drawing on Paul's exegesis in his Epistle to the Galatians.³⁴ In Ephesians 6:11-16, the Apostle Paul exhorts mankind to “induite vos arma Dei,” presenting readers with a poignant metaphor for the Christian struggle against evil (*spiritualia nequitiae*).³⁵ The full call to arms from Ephesians is as follows:

“Induite vos arma Dei, ut possitis stare adversus insidias diaboli. Quia non est nobis conluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem: sed adversus principes et potestates, adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum, contra spiritualia nequitiae in caelestibus. Propterea accipite arma Dei, ut possitis resistere in die malo, et in omnibus perfectistare. State ergo succincti lumbos vestros in veritate: et induiti lorica iustitiae: et calciati pedes in praeparatione evangelii pacis: in omnibus sumentes scutum fidei, in quo possitis omnia tela nequissimi ignea extinguere: et galeam salutis adsumite: et gladium Spiritus, quod est verbum Dei.” (Ephesians 6:11-16)

(Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition

³⁴ Macklin Smith, *Prudentius' 'Psychomachia'*,” 61.

³⁵ Vulgate quotations are from: *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*, ed. Swift Edgar (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2011). See also: John Hermann, *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 6-8.

to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God).

For Paul, the Christian virtues of faith, peace, righteousness, and truth serve as armor for each devotee. This passage is frequently cited as one of Prudentius' sources for the *Psychomachia*, because of its key concept that spiritual life is a constant war with the devil and his forces of evil. Like the *Psychomachia*, Paul presents a vision of every Christian devotee as a *miles Christi*, or a soldier of Christ, dedicated to spiritual warfare.³⁶ Jean-Louis Chalet has argued that the *Psychomachia* "exprime sous forme d'une épopée allégorique l'idéal moral et spirituel de l'ascétisme monastique" (expresses in the form of an allegorical epic the moral and spiritual ideal of monastic asceticism).³⁷ The *Psychomachia* lays out the traditional ascetic dualisms of Christian faith—body versus soul, light versus dark, Devil versus Christ, sin versus faith. Prudentius thus takes the traditional *topoi* of Christian theology and makes them relevant for each individual reader and believer.³⁸

³⁶ This vision similarly appears in other contemporary medieval literature, especially in saints' lives and OE poetry. The following is a select list of scholarship on the *miles christi* trope and spiritual warfare: S. Morrison, "Old English *cempa* in Cynewulf's *Juliana* and the Figure of the *Miles Christi*," *English Language Notes* 17 (1979-1980): 81-84; J. Hill, "The Soldier of Christ in Old English Prose and Poetry," *Leeds Studies in English* new series 12 (1981): 57-80; J.P. Hermann, "The Recurrent Motifs of Spiritual Warfare in Old English Poetry," *Annuaire Mediaevale* 22 (1982): 7-35; Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013).

³⁷ John-Louis Chalet, "La poésie de Prudence dans l'esthétique de son temps," *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé: Lettres d'humanité*, Vol. 45 (1986): 368-386, at 378; Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown, eds., *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Mary Alberi, "'The Sword Which You Hold in Your Hand': Alcuin's Exegesis of *The Two Swords* and the Lay *Miles Christi*," in *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era*, eds. Celia Chazelle and Burton Edwards (Belgium: Turnhout, 2003), 117-131.

³⁸ The concept of the soul as battleground and fortress is well-attested in literature throughout the Middle Ages. I discuss this trope further in the Conclusion of this dissertation—specifically, I focus on the Old English concept of mind-as-fortress in regards to later medieval iterations like "Sawles Warde" and "The Worcester Soul's Address to the Body." For more on allegorized battle and the soul as fortress in Anglo-Saxon England, see: Britt Mize, "The Representation of

After highlighting this combined need for faith and violent action, the *Praefatio* again touts the poem as a model for each reader's life. In describing Abraham's success, Prudentius states:

"haec ad figuram praenotata est linea,
quam nostra recto vita resculpat pede:
vigilandum in armis pectorum fidelium,
omnemque nostri portionem corporis,
quae capta foedae serviat libidini,
domi coactis liberandam viribus" (ll. 50-55).

(This outline has been drawn out before as a sketch which reshapes our life with due measure, showing that we must be vigilant with the weapons of faithful hearts, and that every part of our body that is in captivity and enslaved to foul desire must be set free by collecting strength at home).

In these lines, he offers up his vision of the *Psychomachia* as a template for combatting sin. First and foremost, he encourages readers to use this poem as a model for their own lives. Prudentius explicitly calls his reading of Abraham "haec linea" (this outline or thread), which he sketched out beforehand (*praenotata*) so that readers could be victorious over the false desires, or *libidini*, that lie within their hearts. It's worth pausing on the term "linea" because of its diverse range of

the Mind as an enclosure in Old English Poetry," *Anglo-Saxon England* 35 (2006), 57-90, and J.F. Doubleday, "The Allegory of the Soul as Fortress in Old English Poetry," *Anglia* 88 (1970), 503-5008. See also: Malcolm Godden, "Anglo-Saxons on the Mind" *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, eds. Michael Lapdige and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 271-298; Andy Orchard, "Conspicuous Heroism: Abraham, Prudentius, and the Old English Verse *Genesis*," *The Poems of MS Junius 11: Basic Readings*, ed. R.M. Liuzza (New York: Routledge, 2002), 119-136; John Hermann, "The Recurrent Motif of Spiritual Warfare in old English Poetry," *Annuaire Medievale* 22 (1982), 7-35. In the Late Middle Ages, the concept of the mind/soul as enclosed house and battleground remains a well-used trope. In the poem "Sawles Warde," for example, the poet portrays the soul as a fortress containing Virtues, which is being attacked by unwelcome Vices. The Virtues guard the treasure that the Vices and the archfiend attempt to steal by force throughout the course of the poem. For more on "Sawles Warde" and the theme of soul-as-fortress in the Late Middle Ages, see: Masha Raskolnikov, "Defending the Female Self: 'Sawles Warde' and *Sowlehele*," *Body Against Soul: Gender and Sowlehele in Middle English Allegory* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2009), 139-167. See also: Malcolm Hebron, *The Medieval Siege: Theme and Image in Middle English Romance* (Ann Arbor: Clarendon Press, 1997).

meaning—as Mary Carruthers notes, this word resonates with medieval conceptions of memory and mnemotechnic.³⁹ Prudentius uses this term to refer to Abraham’s story (as an example of what readers should follow), but he also, I argue, uses it to reference the poem’s larger narrative arc. By internalizing and following the text’s *linea* (line or path), which was first drawn by Prudentius, medieval readers could likewise imagine themselves battling their inner Vices every time they read and follow the script. Here, the act of reading and reimagining the text provides a way for readers to productively role-play the eradication of sin. In essence, they are encouraged to engage in *imitatio* by staging the poem’s brutal scenes upon the battlefield within their own souls.

Constructing the Image and the Reader:

The idea that Prudentius’ *Psychomachia* functions as a model or script for imitation and expansion is particularly interesting given the integration of illustration and text in Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23, which provide yet another mechanism for the imaginative substitution described above. It is important to consider how physical images and objects helped medieval readers to construct and guide the creation of a devotional self, both individually and communally.⁴⁰ As Catherine Karkov suggests in her work on the relationship between text and

³⁹ Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 145.

⁴⁰ Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 59. In his study of the Ruthwell Cross, Éamonn Ó Carragáin provides an explanation for how the runic poem carved around the sides of the stone cross demand to be read. He specifically demonstrates how the carved text requires readers to move their eyes up, down, and across the stone monument to make sense of the poem. This active reading practice serves to unite the image and text in a unique and powerful way, unifying viewer and object so that readers recite and reenact the narrative as they move around the Cross. Though the exact merging of word and object on the Ruthwell Cross is certainly unique, Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and art are often deeply concerned with the relationship between visual and verbal. See further: Éamonn Ó Carragáin, “The Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem in its Iconographic and Liturgical Contexts,” *Periticia* 6-7 (1987-88), 1-71 (33-35). Karkov examines this

image, “Sometimes objects speak of their own origins, sometimes they are meant to invoke the authority of an absent owner or patron, or sometimes they function to unite the viewer/reader with the work of art. In every case, they provide us with provocative questions not only about Anglo-Saxon literacy, but also, even more provocatively, about Anglo-Saxon notions of self and identity, both individually and as a people.”⁴¹ I’d therefore like to turn to the mechanics of reading when confronted with both text and image on the manuscript page. Not only do readers take in the text as words, but they must also piece together their interpretation using the images, requiring a more complex and polysemous method of reading. The question then becomes, how and in what order do the visual images relate to the surrounding text?

In his “Rhetoric of the Image” and elsewhere in the *Elements of Semiology*, Roland Barthes argues that the meaning of images is always related to text and language because images are too polysemous, or open to variable interpretations.⁴² Barthes begins his argument by recalling that the term *image* comes from the Latin *imitari*—to imitate, copy, or represent.⁴³ No matter what is actually contained within an image, its primary function remains (even up into the twenty-first century) communication with a reader. Images can entertain or shock with their representations of a scene through, as Barthes suggests, a linked chain of signifiers attached to variable meanings. The primary issue with images is that their meanings can vary widely across individual readers, cultures, and contexts. This is primarily why images are paired with text, in

relationship in her work on Anglo-Saxon art, arguing that the interplay between text and image within the Red Book of Darley draws readers to both visualize and thereby experience the Crucifixion. See further: Catherine Karkov, “Text and Image in the Red Book of Darley,” in *Text, Image, and Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, eds. Alastair J. Minnis and Jane Roberts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 135-148.

⁴¹ Catherine Karkov, “Text and Image in the Red Book of Darley,” 135.

⁴² See further: Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image,” from *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 39-42.

⁴³ Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image,” 32.

which language functions as a tool for elaboration and clarification. At its most basic level, then, text helps readers to identify the elements of the scene within the image in a highly prescribed way.

Although scholars have studied the thorough integration of text and image in the *Psychomachia* manuscripts, the relationship between word and picture in the Anglo-Saxon manuscript copies often resists harmony on the page. In his discussion of the divide between text and image, W. J. T. Mitchell suggests that the two inevitably become embroiled in a “war of signs” that forces readers to prioritize one over the other.⁴⁴ In other words, both resist a simple taxonomy or classification, each seeking instead to dominate the reader’s attention. Richard Gameson similarly suggests in *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* that the visual and written information within a manuscript can never perfectly coincide, even if the text and images are fully integrated—he argues that the imagery, by nature, can either offer a greater or lesser interpretation of the text itself.⁴⁵ Barthes develops this distinction in “Rhetoric and the Image”—he argues that there exists both an image-text in which the text *extends* the meaning of the image (like you would find in comic strips or thought bubbles), and an image-text in which the text *elaborates* the image. He calls the former *relay*, in which new information is added to complete the image. In the latter, the text’s information simply serves to make the image more precise and readable. Within this process of elaboration, Barthes identifies two versions—when the text comes first so that the image is merely an illustration of that text, and when the image comes first so that the text is a restatement of the image.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ W.J.T Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 47.

⁴⁵ Richard Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 43.

⁴⁶ Richard Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, 39-40.

In the case of Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23, however, it is exceedingly difficult to claim that one specific medium takes precedence. The relationship between narrative and image constantly shifts in these manuscripts, as the poem weaves around over eighty illustrations and a wide range of Latin and Old English glosses. The prominence of the illustrations on each page is particularly noteworthy—when images are present, they take up the majority of the space on each page and their importance is highlighted through the double sets of glosses that accompany each illustration. The two manuscripts do not seem to privilege image over text, instead demonstrating a carefully balanced interaction between the two. When Prudentius asks readers to adhere to *haec linea* (this path or sketch), they must necessarily combine both text and image to get the full force of the narrative. As a script, the dialogue between Virtue and Vice is just as essential as the bone-crunching imagery that propels the plot forward. I suggest that the illuminations in Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23 do more than usefully illustrate the text; they push the reader to engage in creative world building to complete or finish each illustration, while also marking chronology within a text that lacks a fully developed imaginative world. Just as the allegory of the *psyche* allows Prudentius to make visible the soul through language, so too do the images represent for readers complex abstract doctrine like Sapientia as a figure for both Christ and the grade of God. Examining the interplay between text and illumination in these manuscripts, as Karkov suggests, is essential in recreating the religious practices and devotional lives of the Anglo-Saxon period.

In both Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23, readers are immediately introduced to the *Psychomachia* by a large image of Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac, demonstrating the importance of visual literacy in the Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia*. In Cleopatra C viii, set just before the explanatory title “Incipit Praefatio” on folio 4r, the Abraham illustration frames the

Praefatio just as the *Praefatio* frames the rest of the poem. The illustration notably dominates the space of the first page, drawing readers' eyes first to the upraised sword and down to Isaac bending over the altar. Although there is a 2-centimeter border that surrounds the image, the figures within the image spill over this boundary and into the outer margins of the page. From within the image border, Abraham looks upward and to the left, seemingly following the orders of God whose hand appears in the left top corner and points towards the altar (see Figure 2.1). Abraham steps up onto the altar where Isaac stands bound with his head bowed—the patriarch's sword, is raised in preparation for the sacrifice. Abraham, as well as the animals that surround him near the altar, spill over the image border and exceed the space of the image.



Figure 2.1 Abraham follows God's command to sacrifice Isaac.
 © British Library Board (Cleopatra C viii, fol. 1r).

The frame that surrounds this introductory image, and indeed the rest of the images in Cleopatra C viii, act as a window through which readers can enter the world of the narrative. The reader is thus able to look through the plane of the page and imagine a world beyond. As

Gameson argues, the pictorial frame here “defines the limit of the flat page in contrast to a recessive image beyond it.”⁴⁷ He nevertheless goes on to note that this phenomenon largely exists in late-Antique manuscripts, and that Anglo-Saxon artists come to flatten this recessive plane so that “the distinction between the space occupied by the image and the plane of the frame became virtually non-existent.”⁴⁸ I would argue, however, that the images in Cleopatra C viii and the Group B *Psychomachia* manuscripts are explicitly taking advantage of the frame’s three-dimensional possibilities. The fact that landscapes spill over the edge of these images and into the space of the frame does not necessarily indicate a flattening or reduction of depth; it could instead indicate that the illustrator wants readers to link their world more securely with the world of the image. While God’s hand remains contained within the frame, the figure of Abraham looms largest, coming forward across the main space of the manuscript page. His raised sword, which bisects the frame and spills into the margins, denotes halted movement, almost as if someone pushed pause during a particularly climatic movie scene. Readers are able to fill in the gaps here, despite the pause, and imagine how the scene will play out based on their foreknowledge of the narrative—God halting Abraham just in time, Abraham dropping his sword, and rushing to unbind his son. By popping out of the frame, the figures transcend the recessive space of the image in order to reach into the reader’s world and make the scene come alive.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Richard Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, 152.

⁴⁸ Richard Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, 152.

⁴⁹ While it is true that medieval illustrations and illuminations often spill over the edges of their frames, I am arguing here and in the rest of this chapter that the spillage is made more prominent and more affective because the poem explicitly and implicitly encourages readers to reenact these scenes within their own minds. The figures that spill out of the frame in these images serve to further bring the poem’s characters to life for readers, so that they can more easily substitute their own *psyche* for the poem’s battleground. For more on the relationship between the borders of the manuscript page and the main text, see: Michael Camille, *Images on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). See also: Evelyn

In another image that follow directly after, Abraham and the high priest Melchisedec celebrate Abraham's defeat of the wicked kings by presenting each other with an offering. Like the image of Abraham and Isaac above, both figures in this scene traverse the boundary of the frame. Abraham takes up the left side of the frame, with one foot on the bottom step and one foot planted firmly outside of the image (Figure 2.2). Melchisedec stands up and to the right of Abraham, with his head jutting across the top border of the image. The perspective of this illustration is striking—though it shows depth in that Abraham stands farther away from the altar and Melchisedec stands directly beside it, the overlapping of the figures and the frame make it difficult to fully interpret. The perspective makes sense if we examine the figures relative to each other, and yet if we widen our scope and examine the surrounding space, both figures oddly stand in front of the image's border. In other words, rather than a series of layers which highlight

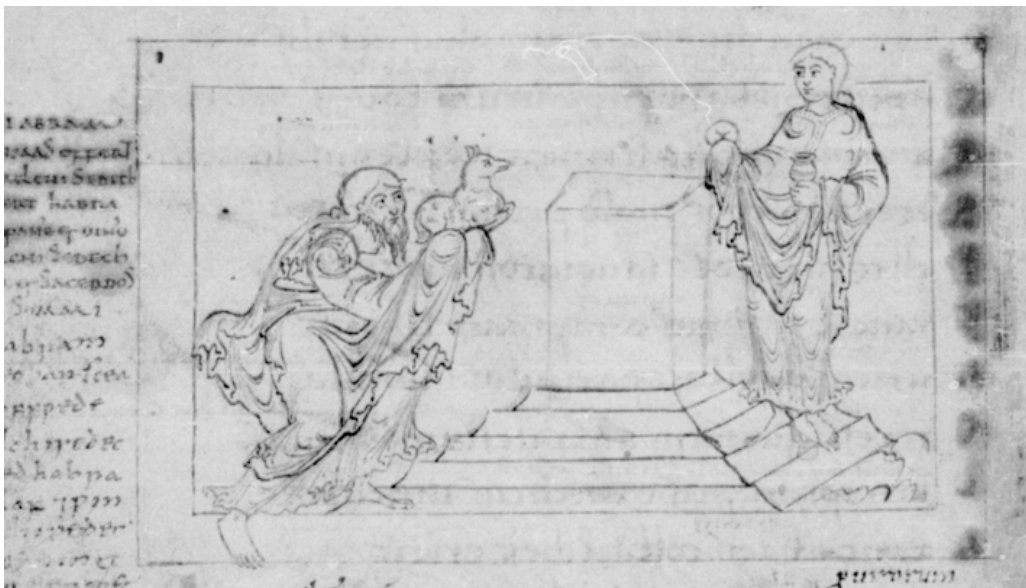


Figure 2.2 Abraham and the priest Melchisedec exchange offerings.
 © British Library Board (Cleopatra C viii, fol. 2v).

Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993).

the image's deep recessive space, it seems as if both figures within the illustration are climbing out of the frame at the same time. This suggests that the illustration is bi-directional. By examining the image relative to itself, readers are encouraged to see the image's depth and perhaps even imagine the continuation of the image within the frame—at the same time, by examining the scene in relation to the text and page, readers are encouraged to understand the images are entering present time and space. What is most important here in these images, is that the allegory is not contained within the frame for readers to view and simply pass-by during their reading. The illustrations, whether their effect is to push or pull, force readers to pause and imagine the scenes playing out concurrently within their own world and *psyche*. If we are to understand this poem as a script or path (*linea*) which readers can use to productively imagine the war between Vices and Virtues within themselves, the bi-directional nature of the illustrations reminds readers that the world of the text is not distinct from their own reality.

This perspectival effect persists as readers move deeper into the poem.⁵⁰ Directly after the *Praefatio*, readers are confronted with a large illustration of Prudentius as both author and devotee (Figure 2.3). The image depicts him kneeling before a church with hands raised in prayer. The perspective in this illustration is off-kilter, just like the previous image featuring Abraham and Melchisedec. Prudentius's body is the focal point, looming large within the frame and eclipsing the church in size. The content of the image seems to sit behind the frame, which borders the image on three sides but is left open along the bottom. While the temple and the landscape sits behind the frame, the figure of Prudentius spills over the planes of the landscape

⁵⁰ For CCCC 23 and Additional 24199, there is no caption for this image. This means that when readers come across this illustration they must correctly interpret it to be a depiction of Prudentius instead of a biblical figure like Abraham or Melchisedec. Perhaps this is meant to be a space for readers to read themselves into the manuscripts—because the main text does not explicitly specify that Prudentius is praying within this section, there seems to be some flexibility for how to interpret the image itself.



Figure 2.3 Prudentius prays before a temple.
 © British Library Board (Cleopatra C viii, fol. 3v).

and the frame, moving into the space of the page. His hands gently wrap around the temple in prayer, placing him in line with the background landscape—and yet, both of his feet exceed the image border so that it seems as if the bottom illustration is falling out of the frame. Like the images above, the figure of Prudentius transects the planes of the illustration and steps out of the image, further binding the world of the poem with the world of the reader. It is significant that this specific image begins the poem’s main narrative. While every other image within Cleopatra C viii illustrates a scene that is explicitly described in the Latin text, the image of Prudentius praying is never once referenced within the poem.

The illustration is positioned right after the retelling of Abraham’s life, and directly before Prudentius’ apostrophe to Christ. As the first thing readers see on folio 3v, the image forces readers to diverge from the poem’s text in order to interpret its relationship to the main narrative. Unlike the other images in this manuscript, readers cannot rely on the poem for an explanation of the image’s contents, and instead must use context clues to reconcile situate it within the narrative sequence. The context, or the section containing an apostrophe to Christ that

is directly below the image of Prudentius, is explicitly marked in the left margins with the word ‘*invocatio*’ in red ink and in capital letters. Prudentius begins this invocation by praising the Trinity, and in a series of questions, asks God, “quo milite pellere culpas/ mens armata queat nostril de pectoris antro” (ll. 5-6) (with what fighting force the soul is furnished and enabled to expel the sins from within our breast). The answer, as we find out several lines later, is the *magnae virtutes* (great Virtues). In this passage, Prudentius moves away from the specificity of his Abraham example and widens his scope to examine the human *anima* (soul) in more general terms. By speaking directly to Christ, he also indirectly relays Christ’s commands to readers: “ipse salutiferas obsess in corpore turmas/ depugnare iubes, ipse excellentibus armas/ artibus ingenium, quibus ad ludibria cordis/ oppugnanda potens tibi dimicet et tibi vincat” (ll. 14-17) (You yourself do command relieving squadrons to fight in the battle in the body close beset, You yourself do arm the spirit with pre-eminent kinds of skill whereby it can be strong to attach the wantonness in the heart and fight for You, conquer for You). Not only does this passage reveal to readers the tools and weapons that Christ has supplied to humanity’s collective arsenal, it also indicates that each and every individual must continually fight the same battle and strive to conquer the sin that lies within.

This apostrophic passage ends with yet another call for readers to take up arms: “vincendi praesens ratio est, si comminus ipsas/ Virtutem facies et conluctantia contra/ viribus infestis liceat portenta notare” (ll. 18-20) (The way for victory is in sight if we observe at close quarters the very features of the Virtues, and the monsters that close with them in deadly struggle). It’s worth pausing here on the exact language he uses when encouraging his readers to join the battle against sin. According to Prudentius, the path to victory will be *praesens* (in sight) as long as readers attend to the *facies* (appearance, or figure) of the Virtues. The focus on sight here is

important, especially in an illustrated poem that successfully moves readers by way of graphic descriptions of warfare. If readers spend time observing, reading, and reflecting upon the poem (both its characters and its narrative arc), then they may be able to successfully win the war against sin.

Both the image and the apostrophe serve to emphasize the universal nature of the soul's struggle. The focal point of the illustration is the act of prayer and supplication—the Latin and OE captions accordingly read, “Prudentius orat” (Prudentius prays) and “Her seo gleawnes heo gebit” (Here prudence prays). Without the main text of the poem explaining exactly who the figure is, readers of Cleopatra C viii must rely on the captions, which in turn provides more flexibility in the process of interpretation. The term *gleawnes* does mean prudence in Old English, but it's also widely used within the Anglo-Saxon corpus to generally indicate ‘wisdom’ and ‘intelligence’ and ‘skill.’⁵¹ The effect of the OE translation is striking—while the Latin caption uses ‘Prudentius’ as a proper noun, the OE turns the author's name into yet another abstraction in a poem filled to the brim with personified figures. In his brief study of the OE captions in Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23, Wieland attributes this translation to scribal error.⁵² And yet, pausing on the implications of the translation itself is useful when examining how a medieval reader would pair the captions, images, and poem together as he or she read.

If a medieval reader is meant to imagine his or her own psyche as the poem's setting, then the personified Virtues and Vices within the narrative are also part of the reader's inner self.

⁵¹ “Gleawnes.” Dictionary of Old English: A to H online, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2016). This illustration caption is the only time, to my knowledge, in which *gleawnes* is used to translate or gloss the term ‘prudentius.’ In Ælfric's *Grammar*, ‘prudentius’ is translated as ‘snotorlicor’; on the whole, it seems as if the term ‘snotor’ is used more frequently to translate ‘prudence’ or the Latin ‘prudens’. See further: ‘prudentius’; ‘snotor’. *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, compiled by Antonette diPaolo Healey with John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project 2009).

⁵² Gernot Wieland, “The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Prudentius's ‘*Psychomachia*’,” 224.

Viewing the illustrated figure above as the personification 'Prudence' instead of the author Prudentius further pushes the reader to use these illustrations as a tool for their own devotion. Personifying *gleawnes* makes the concept of 'prudence' or 'wisdom' more accessible for readers—as Craig Hamilton suggests in his work on rhetoric and the rhetorical tradition, the act of personification transforms wisdom from divine, inaccessible, and intuitive knowledge into a practical wisdom that is intelligible to mankind.⁵³ As the previous chapter demonstrated with *Agustinus*' quest to know the self and God through dialogue with *Gesceadwisnes*, the personified figure Wisdom often stands in for the inner faculties of the mind as a metonymy of the 'self' in medieval literature. So, rather than looking at Prudentius giving thanks, medieval readers might see it as a placeholder for Wisdom, and thus themselves, giving thanks. After all, it is ultimately wisdom that provides a path to God—by imagining the figure within the image as 'Wisdom,' readers are presented with an image of how they must go about attaining salvation through prayer. It is striking that while the image heading this passage speaks to the necessity of peaceful prayer, the corresponding textual passage promotes going to war for the soul and ruthlessly putting down rebellion within the self. In linking the act of war and with the image of prayer, Prudentius again reminds readers that salvation is only possible through a combination of these actions. Prudentius is again calling for readers to use his poem as a path or script to salvation that is dependent upon the reader's ability to complete a series of interpretive steps—read the text and illustrations, synthesize and internalize them, and re-enact them within the mind.

⁵³ Craig Hamilton, "Mapping the mind and body: on W.H. Auden's personifications," *Style* 36, no. 3 (2002), 408-427; at 411. Cited from, Joseph Dodson, *The 'Powers' of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 46-49.

Textual Interpretation and the Old English Captions:

If readers are meant to understand the *Psychomachia* as a poetic representation of the concurrent battle between Virtue and Vice, and if that representation is made accessible through the corresponding illustrations, it then becomes necessary to examine how the illustrations connect with the text on the page, and ultimately how this interaction might affect the way readers interpret the poem. In this section, I turn specifically to the Latin and Old English captions that sit alongside each illustration within Cleopatra C viii, with the Old English directly translating the Latin. While the in-text glosses have been given some attention by scholars like Gernot Wieland, Michael Lapidge, and Sinead O’Sullivan, there has been almost no work done on the captions within the illustration Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* copies. I focus on the captions within the chapter because they act as circumscribed interpretative guides for each illustration, and because they provide a fascinating glimpse into how Anglo-Saxons navigated reading the Latin captions.

In Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23, the Old English captions are usually direct translations of their Latin counterparts. During the first battle between Virtue and Vice, for example, Faith stands in opposition against Worship-of-the-Old-Gods, who is pictured with an idol of a golden calf. The Latin and OE captions in Cleopatra C viii respectively read: “Fides idolatriam repugnat prima” (Faith first opposes idolatry) and “Her se goda geleafa ærest ongan þæt deofolgyld winð” (Her the good faith first struggles against idolatry). As this example demonstrates, the Old English captions follow the formula “Here X did Y,” which continues throughout the entire manuscript. Asa Mittman and Susan Kim suggest in their work on Junius 11, which also contains this caption formula, that the repeated refrain emphasizes their locative function.⁵⁴ In other

⁵⁴ Asa Mittman and Susan Kim, “Locating the Devil “Her” in MS Junius 11,” *Gesta* 54.1 (2014), 3-25, at 5.

words, the captions locate the illustrations spatially, or where they sit on the page, and also temporally within the poem, or where the scenes take place within the larger narrative arc. These illustrations and captions depict key moments within the narrative, or climaxes within each story such as, for example, when Chastity stabs Lust through the throat to prohibit the Vice from befouling the world.

For Mittman and Kim, “these narratives and images also point out for reader-viewers how they might locate themselves with respect to both the text and the images, both in terms of how they interpret and also in physical terms, determining whether their eyes will move with the images away from or toward their own bodies.”⁵⁵ The repeated use of ‘her’ calls attention to the specific events that each illustration depicts, functioning as an arrow that points readers to important moments within the poem and spatially on the manuscript page.⁵⁶ In Cotton Cleopatra C viii, CCCC 23, and in the wider Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition, the use of ‘her’ that is attached to the illustrations recalls the manicule or the ‘pointing hand’ that is common in medieval manuscripts, in which a hand is drawn into the margins that urges readers to mark specific passages or ‘look here.’ A common visual cue in medieval manuscripts, the significance of pointing fingers is similar in function to *nota bene*. As John King suggests in his study of print culture, the deictic significance of the pointing index finger is captured in the derivation of *index*

⁵⁵ Asa Mittman and Susan Kim, “Locating the Devil “Her” in MS Junius 11,” 6. See also: Benjamin Withers, *The Illustrated Old English Hexateuch, Cotton Claudius B iv.: The Frontier of Seeing and Reading in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2007), 286.

⁵⁶ Michael Camille suggests that pointing fingers function as “a sign of acoustical performance, the speaking subject, or... a neat way of expressing the oral witness within the written text” (28). The pointing finger or hand has enjoyed a rich afterlife since the production of medieval manuscripts—we still employ these methods today in note taking, and even on the computer with the ‘hand’ cursor. See further: John King, *Foxe’s ‘Book of Martyrs’ and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See also: Michael Camille, “Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy,” *Art History* 8 (1985), 26-49.

from the Latin *indicere* (to indicate).⁵⁷ Deixis, from the Greek ‘showing’ or ‘pointing,’ is one of the primary methods authors use to orient readers within a text, and to aid the reader in the process of world-building.⁵⁸ Deictic words like *here*, *now*, and *there* thus function as a basic reference point for individual subjectivity—we use these words to locate ourselves within a narrative world, and to distinguish spatial and temporal context.

In his work on reflexivity and deixis, Friedrich Lenz observes that within the frame of discourse the term ‘here’ is always synonymous with ‘now’: “*here* and *now* serve to specify a position, not an extension on the time line and this can only be done in relation to a temporal anchoring point, the time of utterance.”⁵⁹ In a narrative that lacks a fixed time and setting, the glosses that all begin with “her” in the illustrated OE Prudentius manuscripts accordingly serve to mark a relative chronology within the story’s arc and propel the narrative forward, and can thus be read as “at this time, this happened.”⁶⁰ Reading “her” in this way has the added effect of highlighting the eternal present of the entire poem. Karkov uses this argument in her study of Junius 11 when discussing the repetitive fall of the angels, which she argues is used to emphasize the never-ending struggle against sin and damnation.⁶¹ She goes on to note, “If, as Augustine believed, eternity has no past or future, but only an ‘eternal present’ (*totum esse praesens*), then

⁵⁷ John King, *Foxe’s ‘Book of Marytrs’ and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 226. For more on gesture in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, see also: Catherine Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England: Narrative Strategies in the Junius 11 Manuscript* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁵⁸ Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 23.

⁵⁹ Friedrich Lenz, “Reflexivity and Temporality in Discourse Deixis,” in *Anaphors in Text: Cognitive, formal and applied approaches to anaphoric reference*, eds. Monika Schwarz-Friesel, Manfred Consten, and Mareile Knees (Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company, 2007), 73-75. In Anglo-Saxon texts and glosses like the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, “her” is accordingly used to mark time—the entries in the *Chronicle* that mark the beginning of different years are all designated first with “her.” See further: Asa Mittman and Susan Kim, “Locating the Devil “Her” in MS Junius 11,” 17-18.

⁶⁰ Asa Mittman and Susan Kim, “Locating the Devil “Her” in MS Junius 11,” 17.

⁶¹ Catherine Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England*, 67.

these events are always taking place and the sequential repetition, or layering, of image and story may be one way of documenting this phenomenon.”⁶² The fight for mansoul is ever-present, occurring forever in both the past and the present. We saw earlier that the figures within the illustrations try to burst out of their frames, bleeding into the manuscript’s text but also bleeding into our world. Similarly, the use of the deictic ‘here x does y’ locates the illustrations and their action within the readers’ space and time. In other words, reading the text alongside the illustrations allows the reader to see the text as happening in the present (the *now*) as they read.

To highlight the illustrations’ ever-present temporality and their effect on the reader’s experience of the poem, I turn now to the battle between Humility and Pride which occurs near the middle of the narrative. In this scene, Pride takes the stage by galloping headlong across the field to meet Humility only to have her horse stumble into a trench that Deceit dug before the battle first began—Pride is subsequently thrown from her horse and lands in agony in a tangle of broken legs. As Humility bends down to take her victory, the Virtue hesitates, and Hope must come to the rescue to “laudis inspirat amorem” (l. 297) (inspires the love of glory) within the hesitant Virtue. On fol. 13v, the illustration accompanying this event shows Hope exchanging a sword for Humility’s book. Humility quickly decapitates Pride, and Hope chastises the Vice’s corpse both for her disdain and for her boasting. Although there are no words of dialogue within the image frame, the series of illustrations in which Humility and Hope work together to defeat Pride imply both dialogue and movement. When Hope offers her sword, for example, Humility reaches out with her right hand to grasp the weapon while signaling the beginning of the exchange by offering up the book in her left hand. Similarly, after Humility decapitates Pride on fol. 14r, both Virtues stand in a blank frame so that the focus is entirely on their interaction (see Figure 2.4. Humility stands to the right of the frame clutching Pride’s severed head in her right

⁶² Catherine Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England*, 67.

hand, and pointing towards Hope with her left hand; Hope faces Humility and points to the severed head with her right hand while gesturing to Humility with an open left hand.



Figure 2.4 Humility offers Hope the head of Pride.
© British Library Board (Cleopatra C viii, fol. 14r).

The caption for this photo reads: “Humilitas caput suberbiae offert spei” (Humility offers to Hope Superbia’s head), and “Seo eadmodnes heafod þære ofermodignesse aræhte þam hopan” (humility passes the head of pride to hope). Both the caption and the illustration go “off-book,” so to speak, because Humility does not offer her prize to Hope in the main text of the poem; rather, readers are only told that, “extinctum Vitium sancto Spes increpat ore” (l. 184) (Hope with her pure mouth upbraids the dead Vice). The addition of this illustration and caption then functions to add a level of immediate drama and gore to the scene, as the two Virtues engage in

yet another conversation and exchange over the Vice's dripping head that is signaled by the Virtues open handed gestures and pointing fingers.⁶³ The use of present tense in the captions, along with the deictic use of 'her' and the implied horizontal movement in the illustration, again foregrounds the immediacy of the scene so that Humility at the exact moment of reading seems to pass Pride's head to Hope. It is not that this battle occurred once within the psyche, but rather that the battle occurs unendingly in Augustine's *totum esse praesens* (eternal present); each and every time a reader picks up the book and reads the poem, the combination of the illustrations and the captions lead him or her to fall into battle anew.

If we see these captions as signposts, it then becomes necessary to pause and discuss the implications of how a reader might use them to process the poem as a whole. On one hand, the illustrations function to slow readers down—to pause at each moment of violence and triumph—while the captions function to guide the readers' interpretation of each sequential image. On the other hand, the captions can also speed readers up if they examine the images on their own apart from the corresponding text. Because the illustrations make up a significant portion of each page, it is possible readers could use the images as a secondary narrative that can be read separately from the text itself. If this is the case, the captions provide readers with necessary information to consume the narrative both with and apart from the main text. The relationship between caption, text, and image in turn adds a certain flexibility for medieval readers—they must find routes through the text that connect word and image together in productive sequences.

⁶³ For more information on gesture in Anglo-Saxon England, see: C.R. Dodwell. *Anglo-Saxon Gestures and the Roman Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Dodwell links hand and body gestures within Anglo-Saxon art to those found in illustrated manuscripts of Terrence—he focuses specifically on creating links between common gestures found on the Roman stage and those found in Anglo-Saxon art. See also: Catherine Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England*, 19-44; Clifford Davidson, *Gesture in Medieval Drama and Art* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001); Fritz Graf, "Gestures and Conventions: The Gestures of Roman Actors and Orators," in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, eds. J. Bremmer and H. Roodenburg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 35-68.

The final image in the Hope sequence is helpful for unpacking further this multi-directional mode of reading and interpretation. The image depicts Hope unfurling her wings and ascending to Heaven, while the other Virtues halt the battle in their longing to follow her into the Kingdom of Heaven (Figure 2.5). Hope is situated diagonally near the middle of the illustration pointing with both hands as she soars upward to Heaven. The Virtues, on the other hand, are grouped tightly to the left of the frame—each Virtue stares straight ahead with the same expression, though a few point at Hope or acknowledge her with an open-handed gesture. In this image, again, the figures exceed the space of the frame itself. Unlike other figures that we’ve seen above, however, in which the image contents spill out of the frames multi-directionally, the figures in this image only exceed the top of the frame to create a sharp vertical movement. With Hope’s wings and hands reaching upward and the Virtues heads rising above the top of the border, readers’ eyes are drawn upward to contemplate entering the Kingdom of Heaven along with the Virtues.

It is noteworthy that Hope is the only Virtue who may leave the field of battle; the moment she ascends to Heaven is also the only moment in the poem when battle halts, albeit momentarily. Brenda Machosky observes that this scene is also the only point in which Prudentius uses the masculine *animus* to describe the Virtues’ inner-selves. As they stand around watching Hope, “mirantur euntem/ Virtutes tolluntque animos in vota volentes/ ire simul, ni bella duces terrena retardent” (ll. 306-308) (the Virtues gaze after her as she departs and lift their rational souls in a vow, desiring to go with her, but earthly wars detain them as generals).⁶⁴ The use of *animus* here suggests that the Virtues’ desire to leave the battlefield springs from their

⁶⁴ Brenda Machosky, “The Face That Is Not a Face,” 31.

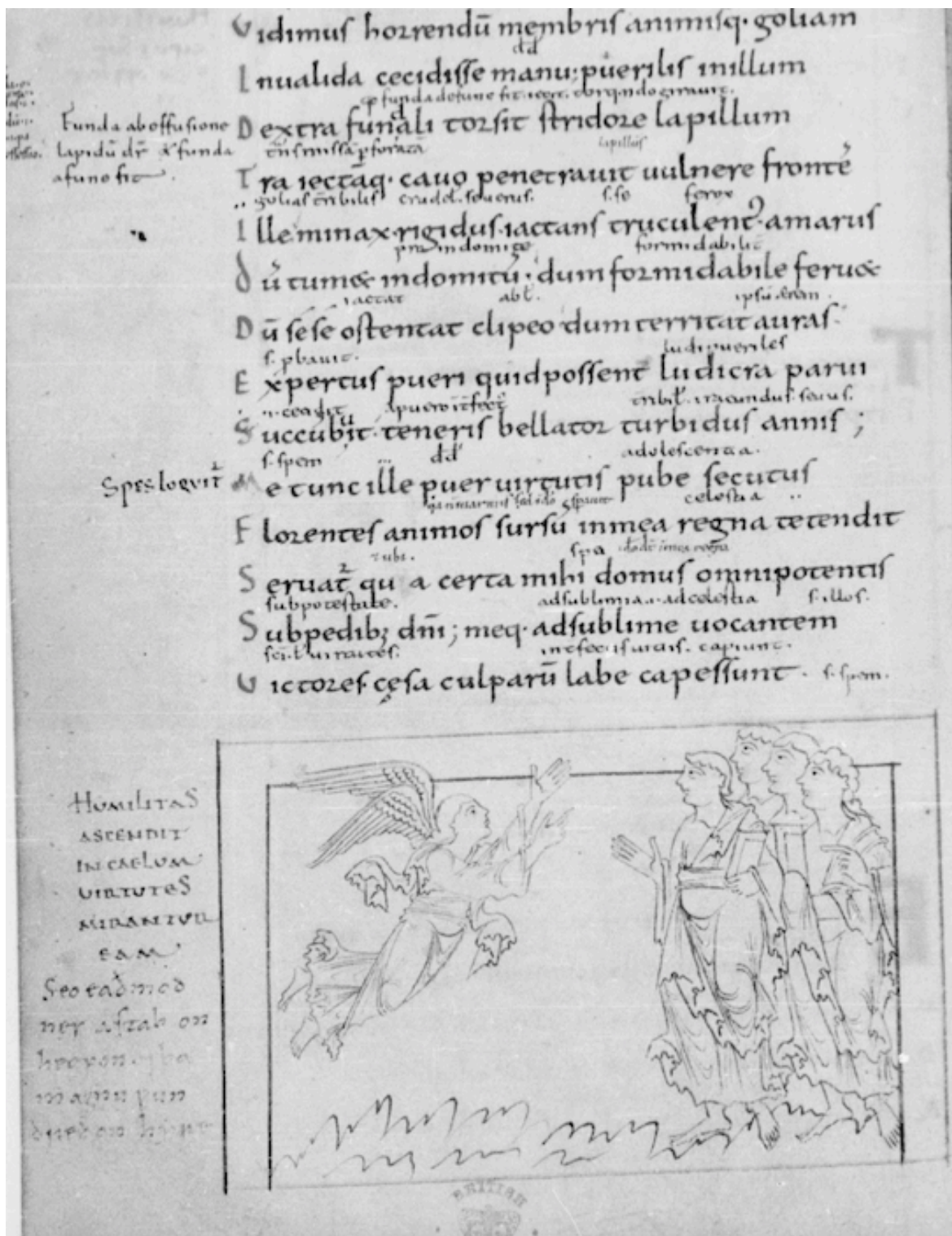


Figure 2.5 Hope ascends to Heaven while the Virtues look on.
 © British Library Board (Cleopatra C viii, fol. 14v).

faculties of mind rather than their *animae* (life-souls).⁶⁵ In her earlier speech upbraiding Pride, Hope boasts that she possesses “certa...domus omnipotentis sub pedibus Domini” (ll. 302-303) (a sure home at the feet of the all-powerful Lord), from which she calls “victores caesa culparum labe” (l. 304) (the victors who have cut down the sins that stain them). Unfortunately for the Virtues, they have not yet fully defeated the Vices and are therefore not counted among the *victores* that Hope calls to Heaven. As Machosky notes, the Hope episode acts as “an apex after which the poem declines, not in the tidy resolution of a denouement but in bewilderment” (32). The Virtues standing together to the right of the frame, I suggest, represent in this moment the whole soul or *psyche* under attack. Just as the Virtues futilely watch Hope rejoin Christ as they are left to continue the war, so too are the souls of readers left stranded in corporeal form until they pass from the world into the afterlife. Above all, then, this passage highlights the perpetuity of the soul’s battle against sin, for even though the *animus* might hope to ascend to Heaven, the *anima* is bound to earth while the body lives.⁶⁶

If Hope ascending to Heaven does indeed act as an apex or hinge within the poem, the captions that lay alongside this illustration are equally important for our interpretation of the sequence. In the Hope image above, a reader’s eyes could move from the main text to the image, and then left across to where the caption resides in the page’s gutter. A reader could also first read the caption and the image when they come to the page, and then move on to the text. In both Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23, the Latin captions for the Hope image read: “Humilitas ascendit in caelum, virtutes mirantur eam” (Humility ascends to Heaven, while the Virtues watch amazed). The Old English captions respectively read: “Seo eaðmodnes astah on heofon, and þa mægnu wundredon hyre” (humility ascended to heaven, and the mighty ones looked at her with

⁶⁵ Brenda Machosky, “The Face That Is Not a Face,” 31.

⁶⁶ Brenda Machosky, “The Face That Is Not a Face,” 32.

wonder) and “Her seo eadmodnys astihð to heofonan ðam oðrum mihtum wundrigendum” (Here humility ascends to heaven, and the other mighty ones regard her with wonder). In this instance, the caption has incorrectly diagnosed what is happening in the image—rather than Hope, the caption indicates that Humility is the Virtue that flies to Heaven in the middle of battle. There are a few possibilities here for the incorrect caption: first, the scribes could have written the captions with reference only to the illustrations and not to the main text, and second, as Wieland suggests, the scribes of Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23 could have merely copied the captions and illustrations from another manuscript with the same misreading of Humility as Hope.⁶⁷

Though it is plausible that the mix-up between Hope and Humility here is due to scribal error, it’s worth pausing to examine the relationship between caption, image, and poem in this scene. The incorrect caption notwithstanding, this passage is challenging for readers to parse. If they read the poem closely, they know it is Hope who flies up to Heaven. And yet, the use of ambiguous nouns like “Virtus” and pronouns “illa” as the main subjects throughout the passage *does* make it difficult to determine who is performing the action. For example, during the climactic scene in which Hope unfurls her wings, the poem states: “dixit, et auratis praestringens aera pinnis/ in caelum se virgo rapit” (ll. 305-306) (With these words, striking the air with her gilded wings, the maid flies off to heaven). The term maid, or “virgo,” is confusingly used throughout the battle passage to refer to both Hope and Humility. In Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23, the corresponding Hope image is similarly difficult to unpack. The winged Hope (named Humility in the image) and the other Virtues are all dressed alike with their tri-point skirts and tunics. Unlike the other illustrations, however, fol. 14v presents the Virtues without their characteristic cowls and head coverings. Because the illustrator typically presents only the Vices with unbound hair, the Virtues here at first glance instead resemble their sinful counterparts.

⁶⁷ Gernot Wieland, “The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Prudentius’s *Psychomachia*,” 223-225.

These details within the Latin text and the corresponding images combine to produce an interpretive puzzle for readers that only becomes more difficult with the addition of the incorrect caption.

It is this analytical dilemma, however, that is potentially productive for medieval readers. The captions (whether they are correct or incorrect) prompt readers to pause and parse each scene in order to make interpretative connections between the text and the illustrations. They thus prompt readers to examine the ways in which the illustrations match up with the main poem by assembling the given information into a logical sequence. Depending on what readers take in first—caption, image, or text—they would need to reconcile that information with the other two components to get a full understanding of the page before they move on to the next scene.⁶⁸ In this way, the captions function like speed bumps for medieval readers, forcing them to slow down on the Latin passages and to internalize the images within their memories. Although the captions don't necessarily capture the full range of motion that the images depict, they productively force readers to pay attention to the poem's minute details, from the Virtues' features to the grittiness of battle. This mode of reading, in which readers must find a path (a *linea*) through various components to make sense of each page, dovetails with Prudentius' goal in writing the poem in the first place. As he argues in the *Praefatio*, “vincendi praesens ratio est, si cominus ipsas/ Virtutem facies et conluctantia contra/ viribus infestis liceat portenta notare” (ll. 18-20) (The way for victory is in sight if we observe at close quarters the very features of the Virtues, and the monsters that close with them in deadly struggle). It is therefore only by winding slowly through the poem's *linea*, or paths, and internalizing the details of the battle that readers can hope to wage their own war against sin.

⁶⁸ Directly above the illustration in Figure 5, for example, there is the marginal gloss “Spes loquit” or “Hope speaks” to further direct readers to the correct translation.

Violence and Virtuosity in the *Psychomachia*:

In this ongoing war, it's important to note that Prudentius calls for readers to observe not just the Virtues, but also those Vices who join in deadly struggle. This means committing to memory the specific attributes and facets of each Vice as well as the details of their inevitably gruesome deaths. The vivid and explicit nature of the poem's violence has elicited diverse reactions from scholars over the years. Historically, scholars have been repulsed by the poem's brutality and pronounced judgment on Prudentius' use of violence by calling it "not good," "unnecessary," "troubling," and even "sadistic."⁶⁹ In Prudentius' *Peristephanon*, which depicts the passion of seven martyrs, scholars like Michael Roberts have accounted for the text's violence by arguing that each martyr's suffering corresponds exactly to the glory that they will receive as a saint.⁷⁰ In the *Psychomachia*, however, the function of the Virtues' violence is less clear. Recent scholarship has begun to trace how historical antecedents could explain the poem's brutality; specifically, scholars have compared the poem to gladiatorial training and combat in Classical and Late Antiquity.⁷¹ Similarly, Martha Malamud has convincingly used the graphic violence within the poem to establish a "language of dismemberment" as a topos based on the connections between the *Psychomachean* narrative and Claudius' *In Rufinum*.⁷² Macklin Smith has further argued that Prudentius uses the conventional combination of Christian warfare and

⁶⁹ See further: John Hermann, *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), p. 14. See also: Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 37.

⁷⁰ Michael Roberts, *Poetry and the Cult of the Martyrs* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 55–76. See also: Marc Mastrangelo, *The Roman Self in Late Antiquity: Prudentius and the Poetics of the Soul* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 145–146.

⁷¹ M. Clement Eagan, *The Poems of Prudentius*, vol. 2, *Fathers of the Church* 52 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press of America, 1965), 82. See also: Smith, *Prudentius's Psychomachia: A Reexamination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 280–96; and Van Dyke, *The Fiction of Truth*, 32–33.

⁷² Martha Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation*, 48–54. *In Rufinum* 2.410–20.

worship, as linked the concept of *milites Christi*, as a method for conversion.⁷³ These studies have laid the groundwork for thinking about the poem within its historical context while highlighting the wide range of pagan and Christian sources Prudentius uses to construct his allegory.

Other recent scholarship has sought to explain the poem's violence through semiotics and post-structuralist theory—in his work to “rehabilitate” the personification trope as more than a cliché rhetorical trick, James Paxson focuses specifically on the poem's graphic physicality.⁷⁴ He argues that the poem's consistent facial destruction (the tongue, lips, teeth, and throat) reveals Prudentius' use of personification as a deeply self-reflexive tool; the dismemberment of the Vices' bodies represents a “literalized reversal of *prosopopoeia*” in which the poetically assembled body is deconstructed in front of the readers' eyes to reveal the inherent problems with figural character invention.⁷⁵ Paxson's analysis goes a long way in reminding scholars that personification isn't merely an inadequate or unsophisticated form, but rather a powerful force for authors to demonstrate self-awareness. To argue that personification is productive because of its self-aware deceptiveness may resuscitate the trope for deconstructionist theorists, but it also clashes with our knowledge of how personification allegories tend to work. For writers like Prudentius, Augustine, and even the *Dream of the Rood* poet, personification doesn't seem to impede interpretation through a type of paralyzing self-referentiality. Rather than highlighting the impossibility of poetic creation, the trope is instead designed to circumvent or resolve

⁷³ For background on the connections between warfare and worship in the Christian tradition, see: Macklin Smith, *Prudentius' Psychomachia*, 109-148.

⁷⁴ James Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 63-81. After studying four death scenes (*Veterum Cultura Deorum*, *Libido*, *Luxuria*, and *Discordia*), he observes that graphic gore is the only physical characteristic that Prudentius gives to his allegorical characters (66-67).

⁷⁵ James Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification*, 68-70. See also: Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 69-76.

problems of fiction and invention—in other words, for a poet like Prudentius, personification allows him to create an image of the soul for readers even though the soul is impossible to substantiate. The personification trope also permits him to simultaneously show multiple facets of the human soul; both the individual battles and the graphic violence, although they remain an unreified poetic fiction, create a compelling template for readers to mentally mimic as they attempt to systematically root out the Vice within themselves.

We can see the extent of the poem's violence in the straightforward structure of each battle—a Vice enters the scene, describes how evil she is, and is then brutally killed. One trend that ties the battles together is the attention to the dead-ness of all the Vices. They are not just killed; they are mangled, dismembered, and scattered across the Earth. For example, in the battle between Luxury and Sobriety, the army of Virtues is first lulled into inaction by the Vice's sweet words and seductive trappings. Sobriety sees her army failing, and hurls a rock at Luxury—the description is as follows:

“...casus agit saxum, medii spiramen ut oris
frangeret, et recavo misceret labra palato.
dentibus introrsum resolutis lingua resectam
dilaniata gulam frustis cum sanguinis inplet.
insolitis dapibus crudescit guttur, et ossa
conliquefacta vorans revomit quas hauserat offas” (ll. 421-424).

“Chance drives the stone to smash the breath-passage in the midst of the face and beat the lips into the arched mouth. The teeth within are loosened, the gullet cut, and the mangled tongue fills it with bloody fragments. The teeth within are loosened, the gullet cut, and the mangled tongue fills it with bloody fragments. Her gorge rises at the strange meal; gulping down the pulped bones she spews up again the lumps she swallowed.”

Though this might sound gruesome to us, this is the ideal for medieval readers—to vanquish Vice without giving quarter, and to purify the soul before sinful thoughts turn to action in the world. The combination of graphic description and illustration doesn't simply act as a memory device that readers can recall at will; the images (both mental and physical) are also invitations

for readers to actively imagine and perform these same scenes within their own psyches. In this way, imagery and images played a significant role in the lives of early medieval devotees.

For Anglo-Saxons like Bede, ‘pictures of holy stories’ (*pincturas sanctarum historiarum*) have both educational and meditative value for readers/viewers.⁷⁶ In his homily for St. Benedict Biscop, he states that Christian art functioned “ad instructionem intuentium proponeretur aduexit videlicet ut qui litterarum lectionem non possent opera domini and saluatoris nostri per ipsarum contuitum discerent imaginum” (for the instruction of those who looked at them, namely so that those who could not read might learn of the works of our Lord and Savior through gazing on images of these [works]).⁷⁷ The artwork that Bede refers to here would be visible to anyone who enters the Church, providing both a way to learn Biblical narratives and, for those well-versed in these stories, a type of mnemonic device to help them remember and call up specific scenes within their minds. As Paul Szarmach suggests in his study of ekphrasis, these images are powerful tools for medieval readers’ devotion, for they “join with what the faithful have otherwise heard or learned, and that is how the images teach by way of memory.”⁷⁸ In his *Historia Abbatum*, Bede further discusses how placing images of Christ and his apostles within the Church performs an even greater function for devotees:

“quatinus intrantes aecclesiam omnes etiam litterarum ignari, quaquauersum intenderent, uel semper amabilem Christi sanctorumque eius, quamuis in imagine, contemplarentur aspectum; uel dominicae incarnationis gratiam uigilantiore mente recolerent; uel extremi discrimen examinis, quasi coram oculis habentes, districtius se ipsi examinare meminissent.”⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Barbara Raw, “Pictures: Books of the Unlearned?” 104.

⁷⁷ Bede, Homily I, 13 in D. Hurst, ed. *Homeliae evangelii*, CCSL 122 (1955), 93. For the English translation, see: J.F. Webb and D. Hurst, *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels*, vol. 1 (Kalamazoo, 1991), p. 131. Cited from Paul Szarmach, “The Dream of the Rood as Ekphrasis,” *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed A.J. Minnis and J. Roberts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 275.

⁷⁸ Paul Szarmach, “The Dream of the Rood as Ekphrasis,” 277.

⁷⁹ *Historia abbatum*, 6, in *Venerabilis Baedae: opera historica*, ed. by Charles Plummer, 2 vols

(So that everyone who entered the church, even if they could not read, wherever they turned their eyes, might have before them the amiable countenance of Christ and his saints, though it were but in a picture, and with watchful minds might revolve on the benefits of our Lord's incarnation, and having before their eyes the perils of the last judgment, might examine their hearts the more strictly on that account).

In Bede's estimation, the panels and portraits that grace the walls of the Church, thanks to the generous donation from Benedict Biscop, have an important contemplative roll in the lives of medieval devotees.⁸⁰ By prompting onlookers to focus their thoughts on Christ and his saints, the images encouraged devotees to meditate on Christ's sacrifice. The key for Bede seems to be that the images prompt a process of internalization—it's not just that they force devotees to recall Biblical stories, it's that imagining and reenacting these scenes within the mind allows devotees to "districtius se ipsi examinare meminissent" (examine their hearts the more strictly on that account).

As Szarmach observes, Bede eventually goes on to describe these images as 'viva scriptura' (living writing), so that images cross the visual/verbal divide to take on "a special immediacy...that makes it particularly effective in transmitting moral teaching and affective piety."⁸¹ While Bede is specifically discussing images and art on display in the Church, the same ideology applies to illumination manuscripts. Jessica Brantley has suggested in her work on late medieval manuscript illumination that the blending of text and image "mimics the experience of theatre-goers, who are equally audience and spectators."⁸² Using Brantley's conception of textual

(Oxford, 1896), I. 369-70. For the English translation, see: Trans. by J. Stevenson (1870) in *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (London, 1970), 353. Cited from Paul Szarmach, "The Dream of the Rood as Ekphrasis," 276.

⁸⁰ Barbara Raw, "Pictures: Books of the Unlearned?" 104. See also: Paul Szarmach, "The Dream of the Rood as Ekphrasis," 267-277.

⁸¹ Paul Szarmach, "The Dream of the Rood as Ekphrasis," 278.

⁸² Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 5.

drama, the combination of text and image that we see in the Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* manuscripts “not only presents texts visually but makes possible their animation in a viewer’s mind.”⁸³ And so, when readers ‘see’ these battles illustrated on the page and embed them within their own minds, they acquire the necessary knowledge to conquer the sins and monsters that reside within them. In this way, the battles between Virtue and Vice are not merely grotesque or violent as some scholars have suggested—they are instead eye-catching foci that are intended to produce specific affective responses in medieval readers. This might mean an individual medieval reader would feel horror at the thought of falling into sin, anger at the Vices’ deceit, or even joy as they recite the Virtues’ own speeches. These are the same affective responses that readers might have while listening to a sermon, participating in the liturgy, and attending civic spectacles within the community.

The poem’s power thus lies both in the combination of the visual and verbal on the manuscript page, and also in the historical context, allusions, and performances that surround the text itself.⁸⁴ The connection here between individual reading practice and communal spectacle cannot be stressed enough. As Brantley suggests, performative private reading relies on imagining and hearing voices in dialogue—it is likely that medieval readers who experience this text privately would be able to dramatize or re-create scenes within the mind by accessing stored memories of communal performance.⁸⁵ Most importantly, just as an audience is asked to perform alongside the actors during the liturgy, so too is a reader called to perform affective responses and to engage in his or her own spiritual warfare each and every time he or she picks up the text. In this way, the poem highlights the ways in which private devotion is mutable and requires

⁸³ Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 7.

⁸⁴ Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 302.

⁸⁵ Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 302.

constant tending and calibration. The *Psychomachia* is productive precisely because it provides a script that can be replayed at will.

Out of every confrontation between Virtue and Vice, the battle between Concord and Discord demonstrates this urgent and repeated need for action. After the Virtues seem to defeat the Vices on the battlefield, the poem climaxes with a final confrontation between these two characters. In a last-ditch attempt to wrest power from the Virtues, Discord disguises herself and walks among the victorious army by casting off her whip and torn robe, and donning the vestments, olive-wreath, and joyful expression of the revelers. Just as the triumphant band is about to cross over the threshold into the Virtues' camp, Discord edges closer to Concord within the crowd, pulls a dagger from her robes, and stabs the Virtue through a small opening in her armor.⁸⁶ The Virtues' retaliation against Discord is swift and merciless—they first silence her by stabbing her tongue, and then rip her limb from limb and scatter her remains to the winds.

For Prudentius, Discord represents uncertainty, ambiguity, and duplicity—three issues that Martha Malamud argues are the poem's primary concern.⁸⁷ Before the Virtues dismember her, Discord is able to briefly address the crowd—she introduces herself with a flourish:

⁸⁶ See further: Martha Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation*, 59.

⁸⁷ Martha Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation*, 64. For his figuration of Discord, Prudentius is drawing on a long Latin tradition. Scholars have accordingly studied the connections between the figure of Discordia, pagan mythology, and Christian doctrine. Martha Malamud has written on the links between Discordia and the *Aeneid*, in which the Fury Allecto appears in disguise to incite Turnus to war (60). She also discusses the similarities to the *Thebaid* in which the ghost of Oedipus' father Laius assumes a false disguise (complete with an olive wreath) in order to drive his grandson Eteocles to war (61). Malamud's references all hinge on Discordia's ability to disguise herself to incite war among the community. For more on this connection with Vergil's work, see: Macklin Smith, *Prudentius Psychomachia: A Reexamination*, 291-293. Jeffrey Bardzell suggests that Concordia and Discordia can be seen as "reflecting aspects of cosmic binding," representing the two ways in which humans can experience God and the universe (51). For a study of Discordia and Concordia in relation to the Stoics, see: Jeffrey Bardzell, *Speculative Grammar and Stoic Language Theory in Medieval Allegorical Narrative: From Prudentius to Alan of Lille* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

“... ‘Discordia dicor,
cognomento Heresis, Deus est mihi discolor’ inquit,
‘nunc minor, aut maior, modo duplex et modo simplex,
cum placet, acrius et de phantasmate visus,
aut innata anima est quoties volu ludere numen;
praeceptor Belial mihi, domus et plaga mundus’.” (ll. 709-714)

(I am called Discord, and my other name is Heresy. The God I have is variable, now lesser, now greater, now double, now single; when I please, he is unsubstantial, a mere apparition, or again the soul within us, when I choose to make a mock of his divinity. My teacher is Belial, my home and country the world).

Even in the short time she speaks, Discord manages to engage in elaborate twisting wordplay. She draws attention to her mastery of language through both alliteration and a pun on her own name: “Discordia dicor...Deus est mihi discolor.”⁸⁸ Malamud rightly links this wordplay back to the Vice’s inherent unreliability: the repetition of sounds in her speech highlights that “the act of speech itself (*dicor*) is a form of *discordia*—the unreliable sounds that shift their meaning according to context in a Lucretian manner seem to demonstrate the impossibility of finding stable signs to represent true meanings.”⁸⁹ Discord’s use of the term *discolor* strengthens her assault against reliable language and opens up a chasm of philosophical uncertainty surrounding the nature of God. Traditional Christian doctrine is rooted in Trinitarian belief that God is simultaneously one and three as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Discord’s adoption of this language, especially in a speech that is meant to illustrate the dangers of duplicity and the instability of language itself, runs the risk of reducing Trinitarian doctrine to absurdity.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Malamud has drawn potential connections between Prudentius’ use of *discolor* and its use in *Aeneid* 6, when the golden bough is described that lets Aeneas transition into the world of the living. She argues that this connection again reinforces Discord’s affinity with liminal spaces and multiplicity. See further: Martha Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation*, 63-64.

⁸⁹ Martha Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation*, 63. As Malamud has also observed, although we might expect Discord to lie and skirt the truth, her introduction is frank and honest in describing her origins and her power (65).

⁹⁰ Martha Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation*, 63-64. To avoid understanding the Trinity as an illogical abstraction, readers had to have a strong grasp of the underlying doctrine and they also had to recognize the Vice’s language as purposefully misleading. For more on the Trinity in

Luckily for medieval readers, Fides' solution to this problem is to brutally silence Discord because she is unable to bear the Vice's speech any longer. Her moral outrage is described in detail: "non tulit ulterius capti blasphemia monstri/ Virtutem regina Fides, sed verba loquentis/ impedit et vocis claudit spiramina pilo,/ pollutam rigida transfigens cupide linguam (ll. 715-716) (Unable to endure the blasphemies of the captive monster any longer, Faith, the queen of the Virtues, stopped her speech and closed off her voice with a javelin, and transfixing her polluted tongue with a rigid spear). While Fides succeeds in cutting off Discord's speech, the echoes of the Vice's language remain present; her torture and eventual death instead both highlight the disconcerting possibility of her continued power over mankind's soul. As the Virtues follow up Fides' violence by brutally dismembering Discord, they eventually divide her remains to the winds, "frustratim sibi quisque rapit quod spargat in auras" (l. 720) (each seizing bits to scatter to the breezes). Out of every illustrated Anglo-Saxon copy, CCCC 23 is the only one to explicitly depict Discord's dismembered body (Figure 2.6), which shows segments of her body laid out on the ground with the Virtues standing above her.⁹¹ By scattering her remains in this way, the Virtues preserve her power of duplicity by literally duplicating her. As a personified figure rather than flesh and blood, the dissemination of Discord's remains would also seem to counterproductively spread her deceitful essence across the Earth.

In Cleopatra C viii and CCCC 23, the initial image in the Concord/Discord sequence of shows Discord stabbing Concord with a spear. Next to the image of Discord wounding Concord in both manuscripts, the caption states in Latin and Old English: "Discordia occultae vulnerat

Anglo-Saxon England, see: Barbara Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation in Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁹¹ This scene is noticeably absent from the Discord illustrations in Cleopatra C viii, which end with the Virtues grabbing hold of the Vice as they begin to dismember her.



**Figure 2.6 The Virtues dismember Discordia.
(CCCC 23, fol. 35r).**

Concordiam”⁹² (Hidden Discord wounds Concord), and “Her seo ungeðwærnes dygollice wundode þa geðwærnesse” (Here hidden discord wounded concord).⁹³ The Vice’s true power, as we learn from the poem and from the Anglo-Saxon illustrations, is rooted in her hiddenness or secrecy (*occulta*). Discord is pictured wearing the same tripartite skirt as the Virtues; with identical clothing and facial features, the only detail that differentiates Discord from the Virtues is her lack of cowl and head covering. Her black hair instead tumbles around her shoulders in both images. As the only Vice in the poem to ever draw a Virtue’s blood, she also symbolizes the

⁹² The Latin here is most likely scribal error—it should read: “Discordia occulta vulnerat concordiam” so that ‘Discordia’ and ‘occulta’ can agree. CCC 23 reads ‘occulta’ instead of ‘occultae’.

⁹³ The illustration and caption diverge from the poem in that depict Discord wounding Concord with a spear rather than a dagger. Wieland argues that this error indicates the Old English scribe copied the caption from another manuscript. Even if the scribe copied the caption and illustration from another now lost copy, the differences between the poem and the illustrations still speak to how readers might engage with and experience this text. Because the images take up so much of the manuscript page throughout this poem, they are on equal footing with the Latin text in terms of visual importance. Readers could thus have had the opportunity to read the poem as narrative, the images as narrative, or a combination of both. The frequent discrepancies between poem and image might indicate moments in which the scribe completed his drawings and captions by primarily referencing other illustrations. See further, Gernot Wieland, *The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Prudentius’ Psychomachia*, 223-225.

acute danger of false complacency for Christian readers. Her ability to mislead and deceive is explicitly what gives her the power to wound the Virtues. The poet continues to highlight the danger of Discord's deceit by paying special attention to the quality of her disguise.⁹⁴ Although she is likened to a serpent and called “feralis bestia” (l. 719) (deadly beast) and “saeva barbaries” (ll. 752-3) (cruel savage), these traits do not stop her from easily hiding among the ranks of the Virtues. Prudentius' extended focus on physical space in this scene is striking, as he describes in great detail how Discord is able to wound Concord just as she moves from the battlefield into the safety of their camp. In CCCC 23, the illustrator has taken great pains to portray Discord as a denizen of liminal spaces (Figure 2.7)—Concord has fully passed over the threshold while Discord remains stuck in place underneath the arch. In this way, both text and illustration stress that as the Virtues enter a liminal space they become more susceptible to the Vice's power. As Martha Malamud suggests, “Discordia, by her very nature, is best suited to functioning in just such an ambiguous area, for it is characteristic of her to be neither one thing nor another.”⁹⁵



Figure 2.7 Discord wounds Concord as the Virtues enter their camp. (CCCC 23, fol. 33r).

⁹⁴ Martha Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation*, 61-2.

⁹⁵ Martha Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation*, 59.

Ultimately, the ease with which she disguises herself and moves through enemy territory underscores the possibility that the Vices will continue to lurk within the mind, hiding out of sight only to reveal themselves at the opportune moment and begin the battle for the soul anew.

With Discord's ambiguity and her incomplete death still echoing across the poem, Concord takes center stage to deliver her victory speech:

“...scissura domestica turbat
rem populi, titubatque foris quod dissidet intus.
Ergo cavete, viri, ne sit sententia discors
Sensibus in nostris, ne secta exotica tectis
nascatur conflata odiis...” (ll. 756-760).

(Division at home upsets the common weal and difference within means faltering abroad. Therefore be on the watch, my soldiers, that there be no discordant thought among our Sentiments, that no foreign faction arise in us from the occasion of hidden quarrels).

Her words here reveal the central anxiety of the *Psychomachia*—although the Virtues assure us that the Vices are vanquished, sin will always return to wreak havoc on mankind. Concord highlights this possibility when she calls for renewed vigilance against *sententia discors* (discordant thought) after Discord is defeated. It is thus fitting that this Vice is the final combatant within the poem because she represents the disorder and deception that each of the Vices seek to cultivate within mankind. At her core, she best describes the constant state of the human soul—apart from God, imprisoned within the flesh, and engaged in a civil war between Virtue and Vice.

The poem concludes with the Virtues' victory, as they construct a walled temple from which to safeguard mankind, but the threat of war nevertheless remains. It only takes remembering the success of Discord's disguise and deception to wonder whether the Vices may eventually enter any stronghold that the Virtues build. Unfortunately for both the Virtues and for mankind, the poem makes it clear that the battle against vice requires constant vigilance in order

to keep the soul safe behind fortress and armor. Prudentius highlights this reality at the very end of the poem by abruptly turning away from the allegory and discontinuing the Virtues' action—in the final paragraph, he turns directly to the readers to again remind them that continual self-reflection is key for salvation. By using this poem to imagine and recreate devotional scenes within the mind every time they read, he says that readers can “tu nos corporei latebrosa pericula operti/ luctantisque animae voluisti agnoscere casus” (ll. 891-2) (learn the dangers that lurk unseen within the body, and the vicissitudes of our soul's struggle). Perhaps, then, it is indeed best to understand the *Psychomachia* as a spiritual exercise then, a literary genre which Pierre Hadot defines as “exercises of reason that will be, for the soul, analogous to the athlete's training or to the application of a medical cure.”⁹⁶

CONCLUSION:

As I've hoped to show in this chapter, the *Psychomachia* at its heart depends on the interaction between word and image, which moves readers to perform devotion by imagining the *psyche* of the *Psychomachia* as their own soul. The combination of text and image in the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts helps readers to construct the creation of a devotional self, both individually and communally. Reading the poem is in turn not a static event in which readers simply take in and remember information. In addition to asking readers to imagine their own soul as the poem's setting, the text creates ties between the poem's battles and historical figures like Abraham and Job, while also requiring readers to locate their own struggle against Vice within the timeline of Christian history. The Anglo-Saxon *Psychomachia* manuscripts, with the addition of the

⁹⁶ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 97. Hadot goes on to suggest that these spiritual exercises consist specifically of self-control and meditation. See also: Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la culture antique*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1958), 297-327.

dynamic illustrations, ultimately require readers to actively step into the world of the text as they read through each battle narrative. Like a theatrical performance, which is ever-changing, the process of staging devotional scenes within the mind produces a flexibility in perspective and interpretation that is rarely discussed Anglo-Saxon studies. The possibilities for medieval readers are endless—every time they picked up the *Psychomachia*, they could focus on one aspect of the poem or stage one scene that would be particularly productive for that specific moment. It is thus the perpetual iterability of this text that makes this text a productive script for devotion.

CHAPTER THREE:

Dramatizing Devotion in the Old English *Vercelli Homily IV*

“La, ðu gramhidige flæsc, hwi ne ongeat ðu me, þa ic wæs on þe?...Næron wyt næfre ane tid on anum willan, for þan þu hyrwdest Godes beboda ond his haligra lare.”

“Men þa leofestan, þonne stent ðæt flæsc aswornod, ond ne mæg andwyrde syllan þam his gaste, ond swæt swiðe laðlicum swate, ond him feallað of unfægere dropan, ond bryt on manig hiw. Hwylum he bið swiðe laðlicum men gelic, þonne wannað he ond doxaþ; oðre hwile he bið blæc ond æhiwe; hwylum he bið collsweart. Ond gelic sio sawl hiwað on yfel bleoh swa same swa se lichoma....”

Þonne clypað þæt deofol to þam deman: þis wæs min agen. Frame hiora geogoðe oð hira ylde hie hyrdon me....”

Þonne cwyð þæs cyninges stefn: “Gang þu, sawl, in þæt forlorene hus. Þa gyt ætsomne syngodon, gyt eac ætsomne swelten...” (ll. 273-274; 286-287; 288-304).¹

This passage above marks the climax of the Old English *Vercelli IV* homily in which a damned soul and body face judgment before God, as Satan, the angels, and all of mankind stand to witness. Together the damned body (gendered masculine) and the damned soul (gendered feminine) transform into many different *hiw* (hues) before eventually becoming *collsweart* (coal-

¹ (Alas you fierce-minded flesh, why did you not consider me while I was within you?... We two were never of one mind a single time; because you despised God’s commands and his holy teaching...Dearly beloved, then the dead flesh stands confounded, and it may not give answer to his soul, and sweats with a very loathsome sweat, and from him fall foul drops, and he breaks into many hues. At times he is very like to the very loathsome man; then he becomes darker in color and turns black; another time he is pale and without color; at times he is coal black. And likewise the soul transforms into an evil color, in the same manner as the body...Then says the devil to the judge: “This was my own. From their youth until their old age, they heard me...” Then says the voice of the king: “Go you, soul, into the forlorn house. Since you two sinned together, you two should also die together...”). All line numbers for *Vercelli IV* in this chapter are from Donald Scragg’s Old English edition of the *Vercelli Homilies*. See: D.G. Scragg. *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 87-107. The translations are my own, though I also consulted Lewis E. Nicholson’s translation in: *The Vercelli Book Homilies: Translations from the Anglo-Saxon* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991).

black), thereby manifesting physically their previous sins on earth. The vivid description of the body and soul as they await punishment encourages medieval readers to imagine hell as a corporeal place with real and painful punishments.² The passage stresses that man will continue feeling after death, and perhaps most importantly, that the soul will ultimately be reunited with her body despite her wish to escape the flesh. What is striking about this passage, other than the colorful transformation of the soul and body, is the alternating dialogue and movement between characters. The scene unfolds as if it were being performed onstage, complete with framed dialogue and temporal markers that identify how the spectacle should play out—in a quick sequence, the soul scolds the body, the body remains *aswornod*, Satan stands and makes his case to God, and God finally proclaims his judgment. The homilist uses markers such as “þonne stent” (then stands), “þonne clypað” (then says), and “þonne cwyð” (then speaks) to move medieval readers through the dialogue; he also uses the phrasing “Hwilum he bið...hwilum he bið” (at times he is... while other times he is) to paratactically depict the shifting metamorphosis of the soul and body. These markers guide them as pseudo-stage directions, indicating how readers should block the scene when they visualize the spectacle as they read.

Within this homiletic passage above, we see the makings of a dramatic text. Traditionally in medieval scholarship, the liturgy has emerged as the birthplace of Old English (OE) drama, with special attention paid to texts like the *Visitatio Sepulchri* which feature explicit costuming and role instructions.³ Many prose texts in the OE corpus have been labelled as “dramatic,” but

² On how the incorporeal soul can be punished in this corporeal manner, see further: Leslie Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2011), 383-390.

³ For more on the *Visitatio Sepulchri* and its dramatic functionality, see: M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 157-170. See also: Dunbar Ogden, “The *Visitatio Sepulchri*: Public Enactment and Hidden Rite,” in *The Dramatic Tradition in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clifford Davidson (New York: AMS, 2005), 28-35; Kaylin O’Dell, “The Mind On-Stage,” 8-9.

few studies delve into what being dramatic in the Anglo-Saxon period entails, or how the dramatic characteristics of these texts influences the way medieval readers experience them. While Chapter Two examined the *Psychomachia* poem and its link between image and text as a mechanism for performance, this chapter thus specifically examines the relationship between performance, private reading, and dialogue in OE homilies. In doing so, I unpack how dramatic homilies like *Vercelli IV* used performative language to require active reading, and how they ultimately provided a script for medieval readers' devotional practice.⁴ I use *Vercelli IV* as a case study both because of its extensive dialogue among characters as we saw above, and because of its place within the private reader, *Vercelli*, Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII.

In his work on dialogue and OE poetry, Allen Frantzen outlines key criteria for medieval drama, such as:

“A speaker and an audience; dialogue that requires impersonation; gestures and words that knit the speaker's world to that of the onlookers; the creation of social communication and exchanges of meaning; and a text that establishes a standard of repetition but allows for each realization to manifest unique qualities.”⁵

As we will see below, *Vercelli IV* meets each and every one of these criteria, which all combine to incite affective emotional responses in readers. By invoking dynamic spectacles like the damned soul's lament and the Judgment Day trial scene, the text is linked with communal Christian doctrine through the liturgy that can be accessed and performed by readers whenever

⁴ Éamon Ó Carragáin has argued that Homilies I-IV work as a separate group within the *Vercelli Book*—Homilies I and III are associated with the Lenten season, while Homilies II and IV are eschatological in nature and urge readers to repeat before it is too late. He states, “Taken together, Homilies I-IV form a devotional group, a separate booklet of material suitable for Lenten reading.” See further: Éamon Ó Carragáin, “Crucifixion as Annunciation: The Relation of ‘The Dream of the Rood’ to the Liturgy Reconsidered,” *English Studies* 63 (1982): 489-490. For more on the history of the liturgy and performance, see also “Performance and Reading” section in the *Introduction*, 7-16.

⁵ Allen Frantzen, “Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry,” 99.

they read and re-read the text.⁶ Dorothy Haines has noted the dramatic potential of the damned soul's lament, comparing the exchange between body and soul to a courtroom drama replete with speaking parts and stage directions.⁷ Samantha Zacher has in turn observed that early homilists found the spectacle of Judgment particularly engaging because the soul's address both facilitated a "minisermone enumerating either the joys or punishments of the afterlife" and functioned as a tool for ruminating on penance and earthly behavior.⁸ While scholars have noticed the homily's dramatic potential, with Donald Scragg even going so far as to call it "the most dramatic and successful of all addresses of the soul to the body in Old English literature," the dramatic or performative nature of OE literature has not been fully explored up until now.⁹ In what follows, I examine the make-up and provenance of *Vercelli IV* and the *Vercelli Book* as a tool for private reading before closely examining the intersection of dialogue and bodily imagery in the homily. Like the *Psychomachia*, I ultimately argue that *Vercelli IV* is what Brantley and Mitchell call an "image-text," or a text in which the overlap of visualized scenes and dialogue moves readers to perform meditation and devotion.¹⁰ In other words, I demonstrate how the Judgment Day trial in

⁶ The eschatological themes that we see in *Vercelli IV*, for example, correspond most closely to liturgy of Rogationtide, which asks devotees to prepare themselves (through meditation and purification) to join with Christ in Heaven. As Bedingfield has argued, "Ælfric reminds us that Christ will return in the same way that he went up on Ascension Day, and this parallel, along with the general idea of entrance into heaven, drew a good deal of eschatological expectation, so that Rogationtide sermons are filled with quite dramatic visions of Heaven and Hell and accounts of Judgment Day. This emphasis makes the penitential processions of Rogationtide a preparation for approaching heaven, and a failure to observe the Rogations, or failure to do so appropriately, carries the threat of punishment in hell." See further: M. Bradford Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy in the Anglo-Saxon Church*, 193. See also: Milton Gatch, "Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies," *Traditio* 21 (1965): 117-165.

⁷ Dorothy Haines, "Courtroom Drama and the Homiletic Monologues of *The Vercelli Book*," 105-126.

⁸ Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 134; 141-4.

⁹ D.G. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, 88.

¹⁰ See further: W.J.T. Mitchell, "Beyond Comparison: Picture, Text, and Method," in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

Vercelli IV provides dramatic dialogue and corresponding images that productively lead medieval readers to substitute themselves as the homily's *ic*-speaker and reenact the scene within the inner space of the mind.

The relationship between reader and text in *Vercelli IV* is complicated because it most likely functioned as a homiletic preaching text before being compiled into the *Vercelli Book*; there is thus always a tension between experiencing the homily orally and reading it individually within the manuscript.¹¹ In both cases, texts such as *Vercelli IV* function, as Hilary Powell suggests, not to create "realistic expression," but to produce in readers and listeners affective responses that "evoke a sympathetic connection" with devotional material.¹² Those who experience the liturgical texts live are prompted to participate through their responses, whether in singing the night office on Maundy Thursday, in joining the processions during Rogationtide, or in prostrating themselves during the *Visitatio Sepulchri*.¹³ For *Vercelli IV*, audiences would be encouraged to pray, weep for their sins, and look forward to Judgment Day. These affected responses are produced whether the homily is heard or read because of its rhetorical design; it is scripted in the first person, it uses deictic language and hails medieval audiences and readers as

1994), 91; Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 5; 330.

¹¹ Carol Symes studies the distinction between written and unwritten performance in "The Medieval Archive and the History of Theatre: Assessing the Written and Unwritten Evidence of Pre-Modern Performance," *Theatre Survey* 52.1 (2011), 29-58.

¹² Hilary Powell, "Following in the Footsteps of Christ: Text and Context in the *Vita Mildrethæ*," *Medium Aevum*, Vol 82.1 (2014), 9. Powell is here echoing the sentiments of Bedingfield when he states: "The point of dramatic liturgical ritual like the *Visitatio* is not to construct for an appreciative audience a representation of biblical history. It is, rather, to make the participants feel that they are, along with the holy women, seeking Christ on Easter morning, finding the proof that he had risen, and proclaiming it to the world." See further: M. Bradford Bedingfield, "Ritual and drama in Anglo-Saxon England: the dangers of the diachronic perspective," *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, eds. Helen Gittos and M. Bradford Bedingfield, Henry Bradshaw Society (London, 2005), 303.

¹³ For a detailed examination of audience participation and response in liturgy, see: Richard Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England, A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 62-99.

pu, and it illustrates for them striking stories using vivid imagery. In his definition of “textual communities,” Brian Stock notes that even when individuals engage in private reading, they are not entirely separated from the community: “What was essential for a textual community, whether large or small, was simply a text, an interpreter, and a public. The text did not have to be written; oral record, memory, and a reperformance sufficed.”¹⁴ This allusion to community is not metaphoric—it involves a group of individuals, readers and listeners, who construct a communal interpretation of texts as they read it aloud—to create, as Stock notes, “a general agreement on the meaning of a text.”¹⁵ So even when monks would retreat to their cells to read, or if a layperson opened the Vercelli Book, they would remain connected to communal interpretation and devotional practice—experiences that are rooted in participating in dramatic spectacles like the liturgy, processions, and the Mass.¹⁶ The experience of communal devotion is in turn what makes scripts like *Vercelli IV* so productive for individual readers, because they could use the experience of live spectacle in Mass or even in penance as a basis for privately imagining and reenacting devotional scenes.

My close reading of *Vercelli IV* that follows unpacks this relationship between performance, affect, and private reading. I argue that readers could use the inner stage of the

¹⁴ Brian Stock, “Medieval Literacy, Linguistic Theory, and Social Organization,” in *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 37.

¹⁵ Brian Stock, “Medieval Literacy,” 37.

¹⁶ I am thinking specifically here of the instructions for private reading in the *Regularis Concordia*: “Ceteris enim horis secundum regulæ præceptum, quia tempus lectionis est, lectioni tantummodo uacentes, silentium diligenti cura in claustris custodiant” (The remaining hours of the day are times for reading, and therefore, in accordance with the ordinance of the Rule, the brethren shall spend time in reading only, keeping strict silence in the cloister). See further: Thomas Symons, ed., *Regularis Concordia: The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation* (London, 1953), 54. As D.K. Smith suggests, the practice of private reading was aimed to improve the spirituality of the individual, and the books were limited to Scripture, homilies, and other devotional material. D.K. Smith, “Humor in Hiding: Laughter Between the Sheets in the Exeter Book Riddles,” in *Humour in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. Jonathan Wilcox (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), 85-6.

mind to supplement communal worship through the act of internalizing and imitating the homily's dramatic rhetoric.¹⁷ *Vercelli IV* motivates readers to mentally re-enact or rehearse its narrative, both in acting as witness to the Judgment Day trial, and in substituting themselves for the text's characters, just as they must respond and participate in the liturgy when they are present in Mass. In other words, this internal process I am arguing for remains intrinsically tied to the communal experience of both the liturgy and devotional artefacts, including live liturgical performances, preaching, icons, and architectural spaces.¹⁸ While privately reading a homily can function to return individual devotees to these lived experiences, the process of reading dramatic texts like *Vercelli IV* could also provide a creative space to construct a devotional self, producing a unique play-space in which readers can recall and virtually enact devotional scenes from different angles. Understood through this framework of internal performance and scripting, the act of reading *Vercelli IV* could function as a form of self-care so that Anglo-Saxon readers could ask questions, reason through doubt, and play out the future spectacle of Judgment Day within

¹⁷ Jody Enders references this space in her discussion of memory and violence—she states, “since memory is situated between the tortured process of rhetorico-dramatic invention and the performance of violence, its mental rehearsals helped to re-enact violence in medieval courtrooms, classrooms, and theaters.” Enders, *The Medieval Theatre of Cruelty*, 66.

¹⁸ Scholars like Jill Stevenson and Katherine Zieman have studied this method of devotion in late medieval texts, respectively calling it “performance literacy” and “liturgical literacy.”¹⁸ With her focus on late medieval devotional media that spans from architecture to art, Stevenson argues that medieval laypeople mentally respond to the “thingness” of devotional texts just as they would to a live performance. Like bodies and objects that are staged in actual performance, devotional texts and images beget in viewers' minds devotional patterns. She refers to this as a “cognitive template” that is embedded within each layperson “through live presence at and with the rhythmic actuality of these live events” (41). See further: Jill Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture: Sensual Piety in Late Medieval York* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 41-46. Zieman, in her study of women's literacy in the late Middle Ages, likewise argues that for medieval women, understanding the liturgy was grounded not in the grammatical strictures of the text, but in a “visceral relationship” that was “grounded in the body.” She goes on to suggest that for the laity “meaning is perceived in the body, not in the mind, and is constructed outside of understanding” (101). See further: Katherine Zieman, “Reading, Singing, and Understanding: Constructions of the Literacy of Women Religious in Late Medieval England,” in *Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Aboard*, ed. Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

the space of their own minds.¹⁹ This internal stage that readers construct can therefore be understood as a space of imagination and potentiality rather than a mere call back to lived experience; it could allow readers, for example, to conceptualize specific future sins and their damning consequences.

Vercelli IV as drama:

The soul and body homily *Vercelli IV* is particularly productive for studying the link between performance and reading because of its use of direct speech and its place in the tenth-century Vercelli Book.²⁰ Though the manuscript's purpose and provenance is still hotly debated, its eclectic compilation of poetry and prose, its *sui generis* compilation, and its plain style has led scholars like Kenneth Sisam and Milton Gatch to argue that it was created to be a private reading text rather than a communal display copy.²¹ The Vercelli Book's readership likewise remains a

¹⁹ For more on self-care in the Middle Ages and its links to modern philosophy, see above in the "Introduction," 5-7, and "Conclusion," 4-5.

²⁰ The Vercelli Book is made up of 135 folios containing twenty-three prose homilies and the poems *Andreas*, *Fates of the Apostles*, *Soul and Body I*, *Homiletic Fragment I*, *The Dream of the Rood*, and *Elene*. As Zacher observes, the manuscript doesn't seem to follow the liturgical calendar, with many homilies repeating the same themes and tropes throughout the book. Homilies II, IV, VII, XIV, XV, and XXII all focus on penitential or Doomsday themes, which make them seem like more generalized sermons that are not related to specific feast days. For a detailed investigation of the manuscript's purpose and liturgical connections, see further: Samantha Zacher, "Locating the Vercelli Homilies: Their Place in the Book, and the Book in its Place," in *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 30-62. See also: Samantha Zacher, "Rereading the Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Homilies," in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, ed. A.J. Kleist (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 173-207; Paul Szarmach, "The Vercelli Prose and Anglo-Saxon Literary History," in *New Readings on the Vercelli Book*, eds. Samantha Zacher and Andy Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 12-40.

²¹ It is important to note that despite its function as private reader, there could be many uses for these homilies, and also that they most likely had previous oral histories as preaching texts before being compiled in the Vercelli Book. The argument that I am creating here does not disregard these possible uses—instead, it focuses on how readers would encounter and experience the homilies specifically in the Vercelli manuscript as individual readers. The manuscript consists of general poetry and prose, as well as prose that is specific to liturgical

vexed question for scholars. Gatch and Éamonn Ó Carragáin have suggested that the manuscript was read by a homogenous monastic audience, whereas Charles Wright has argued that several items in the manuscript were composed for the secular clergy based on the Rogationtide homily series which accepts private ownership of earthly goods.²² Samantha Zacher has noted the variation in both theme and address within the Vercelli Book, which seems to point towards a mixed audience—these forms of address range from the use of different vocative forms such as “men þa leofestan” (beloved men) and “broðor mines” (my brothers), to the rousing address to women in *Vercelli VII*.²³ Although the manuscript’s readership and purpose have yet to be verified, I use the term “reader(s)” within this essay to refer to a mixed Anglo-Saxon audience

dates on the calendar. Samantha Zacher notes that the manuscript compilation is *sui generis* because it alternates between poetry and prose, with no specific order or arrangement. For a thorough discussion of the Vercelli Book’s make-up, see: Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies*, 29-62. For a discussion of the manuscript as a private reader, see: Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), 118. Milton Gatch develops Sisam’s theory and concludes that the emphasis on eschatological themes “must have been intended for penitential reading in a monastic community.” See further: Milton Gatch, “Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies,” 146. Mary Clayton, (in “Homilies and Preaching in Anglo-Saxon England,” *Peritia* 4 (1985), 207-42, repr. in *Old English Prose: Basic Readings*, Paul Szarmach, ed. (London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 151-98), has argued that the homiliary behind the series Vercelli XV-XVIII most likely contained homilies written for a lay audience.

²²Charles D. Wright, “Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII and the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform: Tailored Sources and Implied Audiences,” in *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Meussig (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 203-27; Milton Gatch, “Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies,” 103; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, “How Did the Vercelli Collector Interpret *The Dream of the Rood*?” *Studies in English Language and Early Literature in Honour of Paul Christophersen*, ed. M. Tilling, Occasional Papers in Language and Language Learning 8 (Coleraine: New University of Ulster, 1981), 63-106, at 66-7. Elaine Treharne offers a dissimilar viewpoint—that the Vercelli Book was compiled for a bishop or abbot, based on the repetition of specific feast and fast days and the book’s “programmatically unity.” See further: Elaine Treharne, “The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book,” in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in the Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. Alastair Minnis, Jane Roberts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 253-66.

²³ Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, 36-40. For a thorough discussion of *Vercelli VII* and its ties to women, see: Samantha Zacher, “The Source of Vercelli VII: An Address to Women,” in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. Samantha Zacher, Andy Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 98-149.

based on the consensus of recent scholarship above. The Vercelli Book's suspected use as a private reader allows us to raise productive questions about both the (active) process of reading in Anglo-Saxon England and the process of navigating communal worship and individual devotional practice—for example, if *Vercelli IV* asks readers to privately perform the text, how does that supplement communal devotion? And, how could the dramatic elements within the homily provoke creative engagement with the spectacle of Judgment Day?

As a soul and body homily, *Vercelli IV* both imagines the spectacle of Doomsday and stresses the importance of repentance for individual salvation. The homilist begins the narrative by exhorting his “men þa leofestan” (beloved men) to repent and weep for their sins. With the command “utan geþencan” (l. 72) (let us consider), he introduces a hypothetical Doomsday scenario in which a virtuous and damned soul (*sawle*, f.) directly address their respective bodies (*lichoma*, m.). The saved soul first blesses and thanks her body for its abstinence on earth, followed directly by the damned soul who condemns and weeps for her body's “unrim scylda” (l. 223) (innumerable sins) during their long life.²⁴ During the blessed and damned souls' scenes, the homilist illustrates the moment of judgment in which both souls are finally reunited with their bodies.²⁵ The narrative draws to a close with the homilist's final exhortation for his brethren to weep and repent for their sins, and to shield themselves against the devil's arrows of sin.²⁶

²⁴ All line numbers for *Vercelli IV* in this chapter are from Donald Scragg's Old English edition of the Vercelli Homilies. See: D.G. Scragg. *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 87-107. The translations are my own, though I also consulted Lewis E. Nicholson's translation in: *The Vercelli Book Homilies: Translations from the Anglo-Saxon* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991).

²⁵ Rudolph Willard believes that the transference of the body-and-soul material to the moment of judgment on Doomsday is a late innovation. See further: Rudolph Willard, “The Address of the Soul to the Body,” *PMLA* 50 (1935), 957-83, at 979.

²⁶ For a discussion of the devil's arrows at the conclusion of *Vercelli IV*, see: Thomas Hall, “The Psychedelic Transmogrification of the Soul in *Vercelli Homily IV*,” in *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse: Selected Papers From the International Medieval Congress, Leeds, July 2000*, Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riaño, ed. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 309-22.

The drama of *Vercelli IV* begins with its parallel soul and body structure.²⁷ The reader first encounters the blessed soul's account of her abstinent life on earth before the homilist turns to the damned soul's lamentation—the blessed soul stands trial and is rewarded for her deeds, while the damned soul is punished when she stands at judgment immediately after. Before the blessed soul's address, God pronounces his judgment on her and instructs his angels to receive her: “Onfoð þære eadigan sawle, for þan hio wæs me symle lufiende. Ealle min beboda hire wæron ieða to donne” (ll. 117-19) (Receive that blessed soul because always loved me. All my commands were easy for her to do). The damned soul's address begins not with the moment of judgment, but with the soul's own lament to her body and to a personified Death; “þonne clypað sum sawl to hire lichoman swiðe unrotre stefne ond unbealdre ond heofendre” (ll. 202-3) (Then cries out a soul to her body with a very sorrowful and unconfident and lamenting voice).

The homilist frames this text as a call to his “men þa leofestan” before the narrative moves to direct speech and the dramatized moment of judgment. His exhortations act as a framing device, within which he unfolds the souls' dialogue. The parallel structure of these scenes is further highlighted by their contrasted fates—as Thomas Hall notes, once reunited, the souls and their bodies together go through a “psychedelic” transformation which ends with the blessed and damned pairs becoming respectively, “swa sunna þonne hio biorhtust bið scinende” (l. 96) (like the sun when it shines most brightly) and “collsweart” (l. 102) (coal-black).²⁸ The

²⁷ For a recent look at the body and soul dualism in *Vercelli IV*, as well as the dramatic form of the Judgment Day theme, see: Jacob Riyeff, “Dualism in Soul and Body Literature: The Body-and-Soul Theme in *Vercelli Homily IV*,” *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 112, No. 3 (2015), 453-68. Lewis Nicholson has argued for the balanced precision of good and evil in *Vercelli IV* (in *The Vercelli Book Homilies*, 5), while Cyril Smetana has argued that this parallel structure in the *Vercelli Soul and Body* poem, which likewise illustrates the damned and saved soul, is a carefully constructed diptych. See further: Smetana, “Second Thoughts on ‘Soul and Body’,” *Mediaeval Studies*, 29 (1967), 193-205.

²⁸ Thomas Hall, “The Psychedelic Transmogrification of the Soul in *Vercelli Homily IV*,” 309-22. In Zacher's examination of the *Vercelli Book*'s themes, rhetoric, and readership, she calls the

homilist bookends both the damned and blessed souls' addresses with the exhortations "utan gepencan hu...sprycð sio sawl" (ll. 153-4) (let us think how...this soul speaks) and "ongytað þas word þe dryhten cwyð..." (l. 184) (understand those words which the lord speaks)—his call for readers to stop after each scene and consider "þas word" (those words) requires readers to constantly attend to the greater narrative of salvation. In other words, by providing a stark contrast between good and evil, blessed and damned, and by punctuating each scene with a call to reflect on the souls' words, the homilist asks readers to make a direct causal link between the souls' deeds on earth and their eternal rewards. The pattern of encouraging reflection among readers issues from the Catholic teaching that confession, penance, and reform depend on free choice that is based on communal faith.²⁹ The grammatical structure that homilists use must thus address interpersonal exchanges—in the case of our homilies, the exchange between confessor and those who confess, between man and devils, and between a soul and its body.

As the passage at the very beginning of this chapter demonstrates, unlike many other homilies in the Vercelli Book, *Vercelli IV* is multi-voiced and features a cast of speakers who engage in direct speech—these include God, the devil, the blessed and damned souls, and the homilist himself as narrator. The homily is evenly split between exhortation and direct speech, so that roughly 50% of the homily is made up of the homilist's address to his brethren, and the other 50% is made up of dialogue between the remaining characters—God, Death, Satan, and the two souls. The damned soul becomes the primary focus of the homily because she speaks for the majority of the imagined trial scene, while the blessed soul, God, and Satan have fewer speaking

soul and body tradition the "heart of the corpus." Her recent work on style and rhetoric in the Vercelli texts has also demonstrated their dramatic use of repetition, metaphors, alliterative prose, and embedded lines of verse throughout many of the homilies. See: Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, 140-224.

²⁹ Allen Frantzen, "The Body in 'Soul and Body I'," *The Chaucer Review* 17 (1982), 77.

lines before the moment of judgment.³⁰ The damned soul speaks for 86 of the 160 lines of direct speech, while the saved soul speaks for only 42 lines. The skewed structure could here be representative of the homilist's attempt to figuratively scare the Hell out of his readers with the damned soul's detailed descriptions of sins and damnation.

Scholars have previously noted the overwhelming dramatic presence of eschatological material in the Vercelli Book, which has led *Vercelli IV* to be classified as part of what Charles Wright calls the "pastoral scare" genre.³¹ Medieval homilists, Wright argues, exploited the "vivid, indeed lurid, narratives of the afterlife" that could be found in the apocrypha to enhance the terror of damnation.³² The homilist in turn spends the majority of the text explaining how his readers should weep and be afraid for their earthly sins. As a didactic tool, he bookends the homily with extended descriptions of specific sins and conditions of damnation. He begins the text by spending thirty-four lines (ll. 23-56) describing a plethora of earthly sins (including gluttony, pride, sorcery, and envy) and their punishments in hell. Although the blessed soul does stand trial, the homilist lingers on both the sins of the damned and the damned soul's narrative for twice the amount of time. Because the damned soul makes up the largest speaking role, I largely focus my analysis on her lament to Death and to her own body.

³⁰ Douglas Moffat has speculated that the damned soul's long address may be indicative of long prose addresses that circulated outside of the homiletic tradition, perhaps akin to the Vercelli *Soul and Body* poem. See further: Douglas Moffat, *The Old English Soul and Body*. (New Hampshire: D.S. Brewer, 1990), pp. 34-5. As a point of reference, Frantzen has theorized on the similarly uneven structure of the damned and blessed souls in the Vercelli *Soul and Body* poem, arguing that the poet was "anxious to draw attention from the good body" because he could not "disguise the inevitable truth that the good body too was decaying." Frantzen, "The Body in 'Soul and Body I'," 83.

³¹ See further: Charles Wright, "Old English Homilies and Latin Sources," *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, A.J Kleist, ed. (Turnhout, 2007), 48; Mary Clayton, "Preaching and Teaching," *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 167.

³² Charles Wright, "Old English Homilies and Latin Sources," 47-8.

The tradition of the soul praising and blaming its body for earthly sins seems to have developed around the poignant anxiety concerning their separation after death.³³ In the case of the damned soul, she formally accuses her body of dismissing morality in favor of gluttony and greed. With every lament, she poses accusatory questions to both her body and to Death, such as: “La, ðu gramhidige flæsc, hwi ne ongeat ðu me þa ic wæs on þe? (l. 274-5) (Alas, you hostile-minded flesh, why did you not consider me when I was in you?); and “hwig forgeate ðu me ond þa toweardan tide?” (l. 209) (how did you forget me and that future time?). The portion of the homily reserved for the damned soul’s address is riddled with antithetical descriptions of her bondage and the body’s freedom on earth—according to the damned soul, she was forced into “hæft” (l. 220) (captivity) while the body was free to pursue “unrim scylda” (l. 223) (countless sins). The damned soul also reveals that it was a helpless prisoner starving for spiritual nourishment while its corporeal torturer glutted himself on earthly delights—“he symlede æt his beodgereordum, þæt ic wæs oft swiðe neah ofðylmed ond asmorod” (ll. 245-7) (He feasted at his feasts so that I was very often nearly choked and smothered). In answer to the soul’s accusations, both the dead body and Death are notably silent—the body is present, yet “aswornod” (l. 288) (confounded) and listens to his punishments without verbal comment, while Death is apostrophized and silent. It is worth pausing on both of these silent figures because they both provide drama and create different layers of narrative voice within the homily.

As far as I am aware, *Vercelli IV* and *Vercelli XXII* are the only Old English soul and body homilies that feature an apostrophe to Death. Samantha Zacher has called attention to the

³³ The expression of praise or blame develops within the larger tradition into both monologic and dialogic forms that help to pinpoint the soul and body’s accountability for their sins. In her study on soul and body dialogues, Mary Tuck attests that although the dialogue form evolved from the address, both forms existed simultaneously in medieval literature. See Mary Patricia Tuck, *A Study of Body-and-Soul Poetry in Old and Middle English*. Dissertation for University of Michigan, 1980. Accessed via microfilm, 73. See also: Jacob Rieff, “Dualism in Soul and Body Literature,” 453-68; Louise Dudley, “The Grave,” *Modern Philology* 11 (1913-1914), 529-42.

dramatic nature of these passages, arguing that in both homilies the apostrophe is a unique address that “may reflect the revival of an archaic soul-and-body motif wherein Death was initially cast in the role of psychopomp for the wicked souls, in place of the more common devils and angels.”³⁴ In *Vercelli IV*, the soul’s apostrophic address functions to complicate the dichotomous relationship between addresser (soul) and addressee (body). In the middle of the soul’s speech to her body, she turns to Death while maintaining the second person *þu*, creating a second character and addressee that is encased within her larger lament to her body. As Zacher notes, the turn from the damned body to Death is abrupt and often goes unnoticed; Scragg, for example, conflates the soul’s lament to Death and to her body in his edition by keeping the speeches together and by not separating them with inverted commas.³⁵ I believe these should be demarcated because the soul’s apostrophe to Death both diverts our attention from the body as subject, and also takes up a noticeably large portion of the soul’s address—she spends forty-two lines haranguing Death for his absence (ll. 221-262) which makes up approximately 26% percent of the homily’s total direct speech. After describing her fleshly imprisonment within her body, the damned soul asks Death: “La, ðu deað, hwi let þu minne lichoman swa lange lybban on þam unrihte?” (ll. 221-2) (Alas, you death, why did you let my body live for so long in that unrighteousness?”³⁶ The phrase “la, ðu death” (Alas, you death) is repeated three distinct times within her apostrophe to signal the soul’s continuous address.

³⁴ In “The ‘Body and Soul’ of the Vercelli Book: The Heart of the Corpus,” Zacher links together *Vercelli IV*, *Vercelli XXII*, and *Vercelli XXII*’s source in Isidore’s *Synonyma* in part through their apostrophes to Death. She compellingly identifies *Vercelli XXII* as a new ‘soul and body’ homily based on the verbal and thematic overlaps with other homilies in the genre. See further: Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, 170-8.

³⁵ D.G. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ll. 221-87, pp. 99-101. See further for a discussion of the soul’s speech to Death: Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, 170-2.

³⁶ The soul asks Death another three separate times why he let the body live so long despite his multitude of sins: “La, ðu deað, swa manige ond swa mislice swa ge sindon, hwi ne com eower nan to minum lichoman?” (ll. 232-3) (Lo, you death, so manifold, and so various as you are, why

In his work on semiotics, Jonathan Culler argues that apostrophes both “serve as intensifiers, of images of invested passion,” and function as “nodes or concretizations of stages in a drama of mind.”³⁷ Apostrophe is a rhetorical figure that is born from emotion, in which an individual attempts to construct a state of affairs by asking objects or concepts to become responsive forces that bend to specific desires.³⁸ The apostrophe to Death gives the soul more space to passionately describe the body’s sins and it also emphasizes the futility of her lament in the first place. Her language is full of vivid imagery: she says that the body “fedde his lichoman orenlicost mid smeamettum” (ll. 254-5) (fed his body most excessively with delicacies), “swiðost his lichoman drencte unrihtiddum” (ll. 255-6) (drenched his body most greatly at un-right times), and “swiðust oðre men mid tesowordum tælde in his renceo” (ll. 261-2) (most greatly slandered other men with harm-words in his vanity). As Zacher argues, the sins that the soul enumerates get increasingly specific—the soul explicitly list the sins of “þa niðigan ond þa æfstigan ond þa yðbylgean ond þa gramhydigan ond þa struderan ond þa þeofas ond þa manswaran ond þa leogeras ond þa gytsteras” (ll. 49-51) (the villainous and the envious and the easily-angered and the hostile-minded and the robbers and the thieves and the perjurers and the liars and the greedy).³⁹ The damned soul desperately seeks to explain away her culpability in the body’s fate

came no one of you to my body?”; “Nystes ðu na hu swiðe he me swencte?” (ll. 235-6) (Knew you not how greatly he afflicted me?) and “Eala, ðu deað, hwi noldest ðu niman þara wyrma mete ond forlætan me fram þam fulan geolstre ond þam treowleasan flæsce?” (ll. 248-9) (Alas, you death, why did you not wish to take that food of worms, and release me from that foul matter and that faithless flesh?)

³⁷ Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, and Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 135; 148.

³⁸ Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 138-148. For a similar argument concerning apostrophes in the liturgically-influenced poem ‘The Descent into Hell’, see: P. Conner, “Liturgy and the OE ‘Descent into Hell’,” 189-91.

³⁹ Samantha Zacher highlights the rare compound words like “beodlafum” (l. 243) (table-leavings), “beodgereordum” (l. 246) (feasts), and “tesowordum” (ll. 258; 261) (harm-words) amid her discussion of the homily’s speech patterns and thematic similarities with *Vercelli XXII*. See further: Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, 175.

by placing the blame on Death, bemoaning: “swa lange swa he lifde, ðu me hæfdest forgitenne. Swa me þuhte þæt he moste a lybban ond næfre deaðes byrgean” (ll. 233-5) (As long as he lived, you had almost forgotten me. So it seemed to me that he might live forever and never taste of death). In the drama and resentment of her address, Death’s silence is telling, and functions to reinforce the homilist’s point that “nis nanes mannes onmedla to þæs mycel on þysse worulde þæt he ne scyle deaðes byrigean” (ll. 65-6) (there is the pride of no man so great in this world that he shall not taste death). The homilist stresses that no one, neither damned nor saved, will escape their mortality—readers who stand as witness to this spectacle come to understand that the soul’s lengthy complaint does her no good, and also that her laments to Death will eventually prove as ineffectual as her laments to God at the trial.

Just as Death’s silence stages for readers the need for repentance on earth, the body’s silence plays out a complex dialogue and feedback process between both soul and body, and text and reader.⁴⁰ Although most scholars categorize the soul’s address as monologic because of the *aswornod* body, I would argue they are dialogic in nature.⁴¹ In her study of speech and violence in the OE poem *The Soul’s Address to the Body*, Michelle Hoek suggests that the body’s silence in OE texts like *Vercelli IV* “speaks more eloquently than any of the elaborate speeches given to

⁴⁰ Allen Frantzen, “Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry,” 105. Frantzen is here citing: Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 28.

⁴¹ It has often been suggested that the “soul’s address” is a precursor to the dialogues between soul and body that we frequently see in later Middle English texts. While I agree that the earlier addresses can largely be said to prefigure the later dialogues, I do think there are ways in which these addresses are both requiring and expecting a response—both from the body and the reader himself. See further: Takami Matsuda, “The Middle English Homiletic Poems on Death,” *Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 132-46; Mary Ferguson, “The Structure of the Soul’s Address to the Body in Old English,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 69 (1970), 72-80. Douglas Moffat, *The Old English Soul and Body* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990), 1-41; Mary Patricia Tuck, *A Study of Body-and-Soul Poetry in Old and Middle English*. Dissertation for University of Michigan, (1980), accessed via microfilm, pp.73. See also: Louise Dudley, “The Grave,” *Modern Philology* 11 (1913-1914), 529-42.

it in later soul and body poems.”⁴² Hoek rightly argues that the soul’s accusations both require *and* receive an answer—even if that answer is the body’s continued silence. The putrid rotting flesh acts as a sign for readers, again reminding them that death is inevitable and that the wounded decomposing body (as the manifestation of corporeal life) must eventually stand with the soul on Judgment Day. The homilist explicitly notes: “þa hwile þe hie on twam bioð, ne mæg se lichoma an word geclypian, ne to gode ne to laðe, ac gelice þam he stent swa he wære eorðan lames oððe heardes stancynnes. Ac hie bioð clypiende sona swa hie on anum bioð...” (ll. 169-72) (While that they are in two, the body may not cry out one word, neither for good nor evil, but in that likeness he stands, as he were clay of earth or of hard stone. But they will be crying out soon when they are as one...). Before the body and soul are reunited, the body’s continued silence and decomposition is perhaps a more poignant response for readers than if he verbally responded, because it stresses the importance of good works on earth and the need to repent *before* death.

Bedingfield argues that “the interpretation of monologues or dialogue from poetry or prose as “drama” depends upon a performance in which a role is undertaken.”⁴³ The dialogue that occurs in *Vercelli IV* is evident, both in the body’s silent response that Hoek suggests and in the interaction between text and reader.⁴⁴ Using semiotics to frame the soul’s dialogue, as Allen Frantzen does with *Juliana*, allows us to trace the ways in which readers might have answered this text. According to Jean Alter in his study *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre*, “the referential story always lacks some precision, and individual spectators must draw on their own experience

⁴² Michelle Hoek, “Violence and Ideological Inversion in the Old English Soul’s Address to the Body,” *Exemplaria* 10 (1998), 271-285, at 283.

⁴³ M. Brandford Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy in Anglo-Saxon England* (2002), 145.

⁴⁴ M.R. Rambaran-Olm makes a similar argument concerning the dialogic relationship between narrator and audience in John the Baptist’s Prayer. See: M.R. Rambaran-Olm, *John the Baptist’s Prayer*, 98-101.

or imagination to round up its concretization in their minds.”⁴⁵ Applying Alter’s concept of referentiality, medieval audiences and readers must individually supply context so that the text in question can be both complete and successful.⁴⁶ In *Vercelli IV*, dialogue may offer a type of “courtroom drama” as Dorothy Haines calls it, but it also places the responsibility of supplying answers to the soul’s accusations on the reader because of the body’s noticeable silence.

The homilist fosters readerly identification with the soul and body by keeping their characters as general and unspecific as possible. The blessed soul is introduced merely as “þisse sawle” (l.117) (this soul), while the damned soul is called “sum sawl” (l. 202) (a certain soul)—they become merely *ic* and *þu* when the soul speaks for herself. The damned soul and her body can be said to function as protagonist and antagonist, effectively allowing readers to see the narrative as a curious, though complicated, proto-morality play staged for those devotees whom the sermon seeks to educate and scare into repentance. Morality plays act as guides for their audiences through scripting “everyman” characters, and by using dialogue to provide explicit instructions for attaining salvation. The exhortatory passages in *Vercelli IV* that instruct readers to pray, weep, defend, and shield are temporally connected to the direct speech passages, thereby centering the entire narrative in the continuous present. The homilist speaks to his *men þa leofestan* primarily in the present tense, exhorting them to act in the here and now: to “wepen on þisse medmyclan tide, þæt we ne þurfon eft wepan þone ungendodan wop” (58-60) (weep in this short time so that we need not afterwards weep the unending weeping); to “wepan þa toweardan witu ond him þa ondrædan” (ll. 62-3) (weep for those future tortures and then dread them); and to “geþencan we eac hu we synt on ðysne middangeard gesette” (think also how we are placed

⁴⁵ Jean Alter, *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 98. Using Alter’s work on performance as a framework, Frantzen similarly applies the “feedback process” of a heard performance to the Anglo-Saxon hall in which *scops* performed. Allen Frantzen, “Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry,” 105-6.

⁴⁶ Allen Frantzen, “Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry,” 105.

on this middle-earth) (ll. 58-60; 62-3; 75-6). As the narrative transitions to direct speech, which is an imagining of a hypothetical event, the homilist explicitly ties this future spectacle to his readers' present lives by listing good deeds that they should accomplish *her* (here) on earth, including: "þa þe her swincap swiðost for Godes naman" (l. 103) (those who here labor the most for God's name); "þa þe her heofað ond unrotsiað for hiora synnym" (l. 104) (those who here lament and grieve for their sins); and "þa þe her wepað for hiora gyltum" (l. 105) (those who here weep for their crimes). The homily is therefore located in a timeless present for readers, so that Judgment Day seems imminent when the text prompts them to immediately weep and reflect on their own good works. Following Jonathan Culler's discussion on drama, texts like *Vercelli IV* can be located in discourse and dialogue rather than in a linear storyline—a "special temporality which is the set of all moments at which writing can say 'now'."⁴⁷

Allen Frantzen studies this feedback process between reader and text, arguing that "dialogue holds the key to drama because it is by nature deictic," or a direct verbal exchange indexed by pronouns in written or oral form that can be found in many poems, liturgies, songs, and legal exchanges.⁴⁸ One of the most important elements of deictic language is that it presupposes the existence of a speaker referred to as "I" and a listener addressed as "you". This language is often found in both the liturgy and in later drama more generally because it requires a visual or performative gesture to clarify the indexed pronouns.⁴⁹ In *Vercelli IV*, readers seeking

⁴⁷ Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 148-9.

⁴⁸ Allen Frantzen, "Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry," 106.

⁴⁹ See further: Allen Frantzen, "Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry," 105-7; Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 123-67. For a discussion of dramatic preaching in devotional texts and sermons, see: Ingunn Lunde, "Speech Reporting Strategies in 'Dramatic Preaching': With Examples from East Slavic Festal Sermons," in *Speculum Sermonis: Interdisciplinary Reflections on the Medieval Sermon*, Georgiana Donavin, Cary Nederman, Richard Utz, eds. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 276-7; and Carol Symes, "Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices," in *Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation*, Helen Gittos, Sarah Hamilton, eds. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015), 239-267.

to deepen their devotional connection with God clarify these indexed pronouns by substituting themselves as both the *ic* and *þu*. Keir Elam attributes the centrality of deictic language in drama to the “supremacy of dialogue over recitation” that allows authors to create an image of the world through verbal reference to ‘onstage’ action.⁵⁰ The exchange between personal pronouns creates dramatic form for both Elam and Frantzen in which a speaker and a listener are engaged in a “here and now.”

Within the homily’s direct speech, the referential pronouns center the soul as *ic* (the speaker) and the body as *þu* (the interlocutor and addressee). The alternation between first and second person in the homily creates a parallel *þu* and *ic* structure, which in turn offers readers two characters in dialogue. Though Haines suggests that the soul’s lament is meant to repulse listeners and readers, the soul’s deictic use of *ic* invites readers to imagine themselves in her plight, while her accusatory use of the second person *þu* pushes readers to compare their own bodies with her silent rotting corpse.⁵¹ When haranguing the body for its sins, for example, the soul wails:

“...þu þe wære Godes andsaca swa lange swa ic on ðe wunode, hwær is þin miht ond þine strengo ond þin anmedla ond þin mycle mod ond þine renceo ond þin onwald ond þine oferhigdo ond þin blis... Ic wæs þin wlite ond þin wunsumnes; ic wæs þin spræc ond þin swæcc ond þin fnæst ond þin hawung ond þin gehyrnes ond þin glædnes ond þin onmedla... Eall þæt ðu wære, ic wæs þis eall on þe...” (ll. 267-9; 275-7; 281)

(... You who were God’s enemy as long as I dwelt in you, where is your might and your strength and your arrogance and your great mind and your vanity and your power and your pride and your bliss...? I was your form and your winsomeness. I was your speech and your scent and your breath and your observation and your hearing and your gladness and your glory.... all that you were, I was all of this in you.)

⁵⁰ Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 126-7; Frantzen. “Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry,” 106.

⁵¹ For more on the soul’s lament and the relationship between body and soul, see: Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, 140-178. See also: Thomas N. Hall, “The Psychedelic Transmogrification of the Soul in Vercelli Homily IV,” 309-22.

This passage epitomizes the stark distinction between *ic* and *þu* that runs throughout both the blessed and the damned souls' speeches. Though these changes in narrative voice are often standard in homilies, the homilist's use of deictic language, the *ic* and *þu* structure of the soul's address, provides a script for the readers similar to that of the "everyman" character in morality plays—readers in turn might use the soul's pointed questions to stage their own internal dialogues. And by self-directing this dialogue and re-enacting it within their own minds, they might also use the process of reading this homily to supplement their communal devotion, prepare for confession, and strengthen their commitment to practicing good works. To further facilitate this type of active reading response, the damned soul's speeches are punctuated throughout with the phrases *La* (alas), *Eala* (alas) and *Wa me* (woe is me), which occur eight times within the damned soul's speech alone.⁵² These lamentations evoke the call and response language of antiphons, which require the active participation and imitation of the audience.⁵³ As the scene progresses, the homilist ultimately produces a form of dramatic rhetoric that is reliant on the descriptive tone and the dialogic nature of the soul's lament. The text then becomes devotionally productive when readers use the soul's unrelenting questions as a script for their own salvation—in other words, to imitate the soul's dialogue could allow readers to ascertain their own progress on the path to salvation. In this way, the act of privately reading this homily encourages readers through the deictic language and vivid imagery quoted above to stage the spectacle of Judgment Day within the interior space of the mind so that readers may better ruminate on their own salvation.

⁵² The phrase "La" occurs in the damned soul's lament in lines: 207, 221; 232; 273. "Eala" occurs in lines: 248; 266. And "Wa/Wa me" occurs in lines: 204; 205-6.

⁵³ For a study on the links between performance and antiphonal language, see further: P. Conner, "Liturgy and the OE 'Descent into Hell'," 184-7.

It seems plausible that readers who are conscious of this fear of the afterlife would feel both sympathy and terror for the soul and silent body who are both tortured for their misused time on earth. In addition to the *pu* and *ic* structure, the communal *we* that the homilist uses throughout connects each reader back to his or her larger Christian community. Readers who are familiar with the homily's penitential subject matter and eschatological framework would also be able to link the narrative with their active participation in prayer, confession, and penance as a reminder to constantly pursue eternal salvation.⁵⁴ Jessica Brantley discusses a similar "slippage of voice" within the OE *Descent into Hell*, in which she relates the final lines of the poem to the liturgy—specifically, in the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, "when the celebrant's narration is primary and Mary and Simeon's words are heard as reported speech."⁵⁵ Because these final lines are spoken by the poet's voice who remains outside of the central action, the change in narrative voice "opens the possibility that the sentiment extends mimetically to the work's readers, as well."⁵⁶ In a similar vein, the alternation of narrative voice in *Vercelli IV* accomplishes two modes of performance that become internalized: the *pu* and *ic* structure encourages readers to sympathize with and imagine themselves as the body during the soul's chastisement, while the homilist's use of the first person plural *we* links individual readers both to performed penitential rituals in their daily devotion and to a communal anxiety that surrounds Judgment Day.⁵⁷ It is

⁵⁴ Patrick Conner makes a similar argument in his work on *The Descent into Hell*, in which the poem's final five lines call back to the celebrant's invocation for Baptism and represent the closure of the baptismal rite as well as the closure of the poem. See further: Patrick Conner, "The Liturgy and the Old English 'Descent into Hell'," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (1980), 184-5. For a discussion of devotion and affect in Anglo-Saxon penitentials, see: Allen Frantzen, "Spirituality and Devotion in the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 22 (2005), 117-128.

⁵⁵ Jessica Brantley, "The Utrecht Psalter and the Old English *Descent into Hell*," *Anglo-Saxon England*, Vol. 28 (1999), 50-1.

⁵⁶ Jessica Brantley, "The Utrecht Psalter and the Old English *Descent into Hell*," 50.

⁵⁷ Although *Vercelli IV* has not been linked with a specific event or day on the liturgical calendar, it does potentially have thematic ties to liturgical texts associated with Rogationtide

ultimately this multivalent transaction between the text's dialogue and the reader that makes *Vercelli IV* a devotionally productive script.

Vercelli IV's use of dialogue is ultimately framed within a greater trial narrative that allows readers to stand as both witness and participant in the sentencing of the soul and body. Medieval and modern scholars have both remarked upon the performative nature of jury trials as microcosms of social order and tradition.⁵⁸ While the law has surely changed performance by encouraging the use of legal language in plays, performances have undoubtedly also impacted law, as prosecutors and jurors engage in the spectacle of the trial, to put on a show for the judge and the community at large. Because medieval readers could substitute themselves for the soul and body within the *ic* and *pu* structure as shown above, they might internally stage this Judgment Day trial so that they themselves stand as a defendant before God and creation. The

because of its eschatological subject material, its focus on the relationship between body and soul, and its fear mongering. A fragment of *Vercelli IV* can be found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 367, Part II, Fols. 3r-29r, which (though the manuscript itself is now fragmented) was originally in the order of the church year. The liturgical occasions covered in this manuscript are Easter Sunday and Monday, Rogation Tuesday, the assumption of Mary, the feast of St. Bartholomew, the Exaltation of the Cross, the feast of St. Matthew, and the feast of St. Michael. See further: Mary Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 119-20. For an in-depth discussion on Rogationtide liturgy, see: Bedingfield, "Rogationtide and Ascension," *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England*, 191-209. See also: J. Bazire and J.E. Cross, eds., *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, Toronto Old English Series 7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), introd., xxiv, 131-143.

⁵⁸ For an examination of the dramatic trial scene specifically in *Vercelli IV*, see: Jacob Rieff, "Dualism in Old English Literature: The Body-and-Soul Theme in *Vercelli Homily IV*," 463-8; and, Dorothy Haines, "Courtroom Drama and the Homiletic Monologues of the *Vercelli Book*," 105-26. For a study of Anglo-Saxon trials by jury, and the origins of jury trials, see: Eric Stanley, *Imagining the Anglo-Saxon Past: The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism and Anglo-Saxon Trial by Jury* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000). In modern performance theory, Judith Butler's discussion about the ways in which legal "actors" manipulate language to inflict harm and perform intolerance within trials and the court system can be useful as a reference point. See: Judith Butler, "Burning Acts Injurious Speech." *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London: Routledge, 1997). Similarly, see: Phil Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999). And for distinction between performative utterances and constative utterances, see: J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*. J.O. Urmson, Marina Sbisa, ed. (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962), 6.

homilist facilitates this substitution by making it perfectly clear that each reader will likewise face the same death and trial—he explicitly states, “Nis nanas mannes onmedla to þæs mycel on þysse worulde þæt he ne scyle deaðes byrigean. Ond mid ure sawle anre we sculon riht agyldan on þam myclan dome” (ll. 65-7) (The pride of no man is so great in this world that he will not taste Death; and with our soul alone we must yield righteousness at the great judgment). He goes on to reiterate this promise before the blessed soul speaks: “Ne þearf nanne man tweogian: æfter his deape oðrum þissa he onfehð, swa lif swa unlife, swaðer his gewyrhto bioð ond his earnung” (ll. 93-5) (No one need to doubt; after his death he receives one or the other of these: either life or death, whichever his works are and his merits). In other words, the audience will stand where the souls stand, facing an assembly of angels and devils. The ubiquity of the souls’ plights, along with the parallel *ic* and *þu* structure, enables readers to imagine their own eventual trial in preparation for Judgment Day.

The discursive play between law and performance can perhaps be traced to the transformative effect of legal language itself within the homily. The focus on Judgment Day is certainly not unusual in Anglo-Saxon homilies, and the devotional OE corpus has a wealth of texts that capitalize on eschatological material to inflame the imaginations of their readers.⁵⁹

What I am arguing here is that the *Vercelli IV* homilist's use of the Judgment Day theme would

⁵⁹ The following is a partial list of scholarship on Judgment Day and eschatology: Graham D. Caie, *The Judgment Day Theme in Old English Poetry*, (Copenhagen: Nova, 1976), 73-94, gives a detailed account of how themes of “Judgment and Apocalypse” develop. Milton Gatch also provides a discussion of the theme in homiletic prose in his *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 61-116, and in his article “Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies,” *Traditio* 21 (1965), 117-65. See also: Thomas Hall, “Old English Religious Prose: Rhetorics of Salvation and Damnation,” in *Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature*, eds. David Johnson, Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 136-65; L. Whitbread, “The Doomsday Theme in Old English Poetry,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 89 (1967), 452-81; Thomas D. Hill, “Vision and Judgment in the OE *Christ III*,” *Studies in Philology* 70 (1973), 233-42.

call back to other eschatological texts both inside and outside of the Vercelli Book—but it also at its basic level serves to intensify the homily’s sense of urgency, and dramatize the process of repentance before it is too late.⁶⁰ The foregrounding of judgment (as a concept and also in the number of times the homilist uses the term) enlivens the spectacle of *Vercelli IV*, while also revealing the concrete finality of divine law. As the homilist reiterates:

“Ond swa he wile asmeagean ælces mannes, ge gode dæda ge yfele dæda, ge worda gesprece ge worca gedonra, ge geðohtra geþanca gee arena gehyrnesse. Ealle we sculon agyldan þam ecan deman on þam myclan dome” (ll. 185-9)

(And so he will wish to examine of each man the good deeds and the evil deeds; both the words spoken and the deeds performed; both the thoughts thought and the hearing of the ears. We should yield all to the Eternal Judge at the great judgment).

As if readers did not grasp the gravity of the text’s narrative, the homilist then states frankly (leaving no hope for a loophole): “hwylcne *dom* him dryhten *deman* wille be ðam *dom* þe he ðam halgum *demed* hæfð” (emphasis mine, ll. 196-7) (The Lord will *judge* each *judgment* for them according to the *law* with which he *judged* the holy ones).⁶¹ The constant reiteration of *deman* and *dom* in these two passages produces an acute sense of urgency, so that readers are compelled to take devotional action immediately in the here and now based on their fear of damnation.

In his study of the Judgment Day theme in Old English poetry, Graham Caie traces the etymology of the term *dom* as related to law, judgment, glory, and fame. He suggests that

⁶⁰ Many of the Vercelli Homilies are strongly eschatological—in particular, Vercelli II, IV, VIII, XV, and XXI describe the end of the world in detail, while X uses Judgment Day to emphasize the ephemerality of earthly life. For the OE homiletic texts, see: D.G. Scragg, ed., *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁶¹ In *Soul and Body I*, the poet likewise calls upon readers to actively examine their actions (both outer and inner) on pain of eternal damnation. He cautions us to look to our souls, specifically keeping in mind the eventual separation between soul and body at death—“Huru þæs behofað hæleða æghwylc þæt he his sawle sið sylfa gepence, hu þæt bið deoplic þonne se deað cymeð asyndreð þa sybbe þe ær samod wæron.” T.A. Shippey, “Soul and Body I.” *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1976), 104.

eschatology in OE literature is neither temporal nor cosmic; it instead uses the terrifying end result of *Domsday* to highlight an “ever-present apocalyptic moment,” in which readers must constantly battle their sins to win Christ’s saving grace.⁶² By foregrounding the need to act before *dom* occurs, *Vercelli IV* thus functions to heighten the emotional intensity of the *Domsday* spectacle, and incites readers to activism and critique through the process of mimicry (i.e. they read about this trial and are provoked to question and change their own actions to avoid similar fates). Every time readers choose to read this homily in the Vercelli Book, they are reminded of specific sins to avoid, of good works they must accomplish on earth, and prayers they must make to Christ before Judgment day. Together, these actions function to shield the reader from damnation, just as Christ will shield his flock from the devil’s arrows at the end of the homily. The process of reading this homily, and re-staging the soul’s questions within the self, allows readers to “gegangen þæs hælendes syclde near ond þæs diofles stræle fyr” (ll. 343-4) (go near to the Lord’s shield and far from the devil’s arrow). *Vercelli IV* moves between exhortation and dialogue and imagery, alternating between ordering readers to repent their sins, and showing them through violent description what happens if they fail to do so. It thus reveals the inextricable weaving together of representation and discourse, and the overlap of visual and verbal experience.⁶³

⁶² Graham Caie, *The Judgment Day Theme in Old English Poetry*, 93-4.

⁶³ In Frantzen’s discussion of *Juliana*, he uses Joaquín Martínez Pizarro’s work on rhetoric and drama, which is helpful for understanding the key role that dialogue and imagery play in dramatic texts. To paraphrase their arguments, Joaquín Martínez Pizarro uses the concept “rhetoric of the scene” to explain the difference between a narrative that is shown or “acted out” and one that is told. In the latter narrative, the narrator acts as a guide for the reader, standing between the reader and the text’s action; in the former, the narrator becomes eliminated when the text represents the action directly through the combined effort of dialogue and imagery. The second tradition, for Pizarro, creates a visualizing effect because the reader stands as witness to the events being shown in the narrative. As Frantzen argues, “gesture and posture become ‘dramatic elements’ that ‘contribute to the illusion of some kind of visual correlative’ of the narrative. The less that is said about the situation by the narrator, the more must be

If *Vercelli IV* is to be understood as a dramatic script that incites readers to internally stage and imitate the narrative, it then becomes necessary to discuss the homily's connection with visual language. Rituals or spectacles that are performed in front of an audience have the benefit of combining physical action with words to create a compelling narrative. In private reading, the homilist may thus seem comparatively limited in his lack of visual imagery. Jessica Brantley studies this problem within the late-fifteenth century London, British Library, Additional MS 37049, which presents readers with a comprehensive harmony between manuscript illumination and dialogic text (Brantley's designates it as an "imagetext" via W.J.T. Mitchell's *Picture Theory*).⁶⁴ As we saw in Chapter One, she suggests that the blending of text and image "mimics the quintessential experience of theatre-goers, who are equally audience and spectators."⁶⁵ And as she goes on to note, the combination of dialogue and image presents texts visually and "makes possible their animation in a reader/viewer's mind."⁶⁶

communicated by dialogue and by gestures and objects." See further: Allen Frantzen, "Dialogue and Drama in *Juliana*, 108; and Pizarro, *A Rhetoric of the Scene: Dramatic Narrative in the Early Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 13. W.J.T. Mitchell likewise examines the relationship between image and text, arguing that it is not simply a technical question, but rather a "site of conflict, a nexus where political, institutional, and social antagonisms play themselves out in the materiality of representation." W.J.T. Mitchell, "Beyond Comparison: Picture, Text, and Method," in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 91.

⁶⁴ Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 5; 330. See also: W.J.T. Mitchell, "Beyond Comparison: Picture, Text, and Method," 83-107. Mitchell created the term to have a wide application—it can describe images and text that are intermixed together, or images and texts that remain decidedly un-mixed. His claim is that every text and image is really an 'imagetext' because textuality can never been untangled from visuality.

⁶⁵ Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 5.

⁶⁶ In MS Additional 37049, Brantley is working with texts that use both words and illuminated images, like in the Middle English soul and body text *Disputacion Betwyx þe saule & þe body*, in which a naked soul is depicted in conversation with a skeletal body that lies nearby in a coffin. See further: Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 5-10; 221-258. Like Brantley, Rambaran-Olm discusses the dramatic power of images in her study of baptism in the Anglo-Saxon Period—she argues that representations of Christ and John the Baptist serve to remind audiences to "remain focused on Christ's baptismal act with the overall aim to recognize the

Even though *Vercelli IV* does not have corresponding illuminations, Brantley's insights on the function of "imagetexts" still have value. The "soul and body" genre offers an exciting combination of image and narrative voice that is productive for readers—as Brantley calls it, the "animated interweaving of words with pictures."⁶⁷ The vivid descriptions in the homily, unlike her examples, instead provide the basis for *mental* images or pictures that make the narrative come alive for readers.⁶⁸ As Augustine describes in *De Trinitate*, mental images are cognitive fictions created when the mind sees, hears, or reads about an earthly thing and must represent it with bodily features or forms. Augustine notably does not differentiate between things read and things heard when discussing scripture, as when he states: "Quis enim legentium vel audientium quae scripsit apostulus Paulus vel quae de illo scripta sunt non fingat animo et ipsius apostoli faciem et omnium quorum ibi nomina commemorantur?" (Who, upon reading or listening to what Paul the Apostle wrote or what has been written about him, does not fashion in his mind both the appearance of the Apostle and also of all those whose names are there remembered?).⁶⁹ The implication here, as Mary Carruthers notes, is that any reader experiencing a text will paint pictures in their own mind to digest the material, whether or not physical illuminations are

soul's need for salvation" (140). The poem *John the Baptist's Prayer*, she goes on to argue, successfully uses baptismal imagery in order to summon "the use of characters linked to baptism in order to support a message focused on the soul's journey. So, similar to Brantley's analysis of images in MS Additional 37049, the poem's images function to highlight the reader or viewer's own devotional journey. See further: M.R. Rambaran-Olm, "Selected Comparative Studies and Analogous Literature," in *John the Baptist's Prayer or The Descent into Hell from the Exeter Book*, 136-141.

⁶⁷ Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 214.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of mental images in Gregory, Augustine, and the later Middle Ages, see: Michelle Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 18-20; 70-75. For a more scientific overview of mental processes and cognition, see: Dennis Coon, John O. Mitterer, *Introduction to Psychology: Gateways to Mind and Behavior* (California: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010), 284-7.

⁶⁹ Augustine, *De Trinitate* VIII.iv.7, CCSL 50 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968), 275.32. Translation was taken from Mary Carruthers' *The Craft of Thought*, 120-123.

present.⁷⁰ Mental images are thus essential for medieval readers, so that they may sort and digest their experiences of both the world and of texts.⁷¹ In this way, these mental “craftings” as Carruthers calls them, allow us to form theories of how the world works by constructing possible outcomes without having to directly experience the event.⁷² In her work on meditation and cognition, Michelle Karnes rightly suggests that “mental images function not to alienate the mind from its object but to provide access to that object.”⁷³

For *Vercelli IV* and other devotional eschatological material, the mental construction of a Doomsday trial scene helps readers to “experience” this event without first having to die. Though dialogue and deictic language is a large part of how *Vercelli IV* is devotionally and dramatically productive, the image of the rotting body does more than provide a counterpoint to the soul’s dialogue. It also provides readers with a visceral image of what will occur to their own bodies after death. Brantley and Mitchell’s image-theory can shed more light on the homilist’s gruesome treatment of the silent body. The homilist generates in readers a sense of revulsion towards sin, as the soul describes her damned body as “eorðan lamb ond dust ond wyrma gifel ond wambscyldinga fætels...” (l. 208) (earth-loam and dust and food of worms and gluttonous vessel). The soul describes the body in an assortment of colorful names, including: *wyrma mete* (worms’ meat), *fulan geolstre* (foul matter), *treowleasan flæsc* (faithless flesh) (ll. 249-50). She also describes in an epithet how animals have desiccated the body in death—the damned body is called, “wyrma gecow ond wulfes geslit ond fugles geter” (l. 265) (chewed food of worms,

⁷⁰ Carruthers further notes that Augustine is here not associating mental imagery with a certain type of reading. He is referring to the dual practice of reading out loud or reading silently—the first was a common practice in school and in the monastery, while the second was that of “meditative, ruminative reading” that is coupled with prayer and knowing the self. See: Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 121-2.

⁷¹ Steve Pinker, “The Mind’s Eye.” *How the Mind Works* (New York: Oxford University Press), 211-8. See also: A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism*, especially chapters 2-3.

⁷² Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 172.

⁷³ Michelle Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages*, 18.

rending of wolves, tearing of birds).⁷⁴ After both soul and body are judged by God, the body is then shown to “swæt swiðe laðlicum swate...ond bryt on manig hiw” (ll. 289-90) (sweat a very loathsome sweat...and burst into many hues).

The body’s decomposition in this way acts as a powerful sign for Anglo-Saxon readers, who could use the detailed image of the rotting corpse to both envision and ruminate on their own future moment of judgment. The physical attacks on the body that the soul highlights (as when she calls him “wyrma gecow” (l. 266), or “worm food”) allows him to take center-stage as the site where divine justice and punishment occur. As a site of punishment, the body has a greater impact on God’s judgment than the soul’s diatribe. According to the soul, the body’s sins on earth must answer for both of them (“for unc,” or “we two”) on Judgment Day. Her accusations and pleas are therefore subordinated to the body’s telling silence and rotting flesh. This link between soul and body goes so far that the soul can only speak and perform penance via the body’s imprisonment and mutilation.⁷⁵ And perhaps more tellingly, when body and soul are reunited at the final moment of Judgment, the soul ceases to speak and plead her case—instead, the homilist states, “standaþ butu swiðe forhte ond bifigende onbidað domes” (l. 294) (then both stand very afraid, and with trembling, await their judgment.) The success of the soul and body homilies would be limited without this graphic focus on the body. Elaine Scarry suggests in *The Body in Pain* that stopping the practice of torture is directly correlated with the

⁷⁴ In other soul and body texts like Vercelli *Soul and Body I*, the poet further emphasizes corporeal decomposition to reflect the utter decimation of the physical body. Worms (led by their sharp-toothed leader, *Gifer*) rip and rend the body to pieces before Judgment Day occurs—featuring colorful descriptions of this massacre, using terms like *tohliden* (burst open), *toleopode* (tear apart), *toginene* (gape), *toslitene* (tear asunder), and *bicowen* (chew) to describe the worms’ handiwork. T.A. Shippey, “Soul and Body I,” *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1976), 108-9.

⁷⁵ Michelle Hoek, “Violence and Ideological Inversion in the Soul’s Address,” 276.

ability to “communicate the reality of pain to those who are not themselves in pain.”⁷⁶ In other words, readers must come as close to *feeling* the pain as possible through extensive description and visual imagery. Along with the homily’s persuasive speech, these mental images of Judgment Day, the rotting body, and the soul’s transformation provide a means for readers to re-enact the homily’s scenes upon the stage of their minds. It is again tempting to make a link between *Vercelli IV* and a type of silent morality play based upon the text’s function—namely, to educate and entertain readers by manipulating their desire to escape eternal torture.

The process of imagining these scenes and re-enacting them privately upon the mind’s stage reinforces for readers how the consequences of *synne-lustas* (sinful pleasures) are both real and painful. Readers may not experience what Thomas Hall calls the body’s “psychedelic” transformation, but it is easy to see how the homily’s imagery of bodily decomposition and transformation could produce in readers an affective response—like the damned soul and body, they might also sweat in fear and dread after mentally staging what awaits sinful men after death. Specifically, the fear that their own bodies will become “gealstor ond fulnes” (l. 209) (poison and foulness) in death, and the fear that devils will repeatedly shoot their souls with so many arrows that “nis æniges mannes gemet þæt hit aseccan mæge” (l. 314) (there is no measuring of them for any man that it may be related). Because the body is never able to answer the soul’s allegations, it falls on the reader to respond—either in his bodily reaction (sweat, fear, guilt) or his subsequent efforts to improve his eternal lot (confession, penance, prayer).

The point of devotional literature as a genre is to encourage active reading, introspection, and a turning inward into one’s own spiritual affairs. Through the dramatic tone of the soul’s lament, *Vercelli IV* asks readers to complete a type of spiritual dissection—one that is performed

⁷⁶ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 9.

as often as the text is read or heard. In this way, *Vercelli IV* also highlights the ways in which private devotion is mutable and requires constant tending and calibration. The homilist consistently asks readers to weep for their sins and amend their past offenses.⁷⁷ He specifically explains: “Wepen we on þisse medmyclan tide, þæt we ne þurfon eft wepan þone ungeendodan wop” (ll.58-60) (we weep in this short time, so that we need not afterwards weep unendingly). He similarly asks readers to continually confess our sinful deeds and thoughts: “Hwæt us is la selre on þysse worulde þæt we symle ure synna hreowe don ond hie mid ælmessan lysen þæt we eft ne þurfon þa ecan witu þrowian” (ll. 63-5) (What is better for us in this world, that we always do penance for our sins and deliver ourselves from them with almsgiving, so that we need not then suffer eternal tortures?). Both of these quotes highlight the perpetuity of devotional life. In other words, there is not a single activity that man can perform in isolation that will guarantee salvation. Instead, Anglo-Saxon readers must constantly self-evaluate every time they read this homily to assess their spiritual well-being—part of this self-evaluation, I argue, is the imagination and staging of devotional scenes like Judgment Day as a measure for individual salvation. Based on the results of this evaluation, individuals should in turn perform rituals like confession, penance, and recitation of prayer according to each specific sin.

⁷⁷ The homilist mentions weeping as a form of penance in the following lines: “ic eow bidde ond eaðmodlice lære þæt ge wepen ond forhtien” (ll.1-2) (I ask and humbly exhort that you weep and fear); “wepen on þisse medmyclan tide, þæt we ne þurfon eft wepan þone ungendodan wop” (ll. 58-60) (weep in this short time so that we need not afterwards weep the unending weeping); “wepan þa toweardan witu ond him þa ondrædan?” (ll. 62-3) (weep for those future tortures and then dread them); “þa þe her wepað for hiora gyltum, ða bioð þær on mycelre wlenceo” (l. 105) (those who here weep for their crimes, they will be there in greater glory); “Ond þonne standað forhte ond afærede, þa þe ær wirigdon unriht worhton. Ond swiðe betwyh him heofað ond wepað...” (ll. 194-5) (And then they will stand terrified and afraid, those who had previously performed injuries and unrighteous works. And quickly among them they will lament and weep).

The point of such self-directed study, as Alan Sinfield suggests in his study on the technology of the soul, “was not to relax, but to savor the nuances of one’s spiritual condition.”⁷⁸ Anxious self-examination was thus the gratification. By constructing a moral framework for readers and listeners, *Vercelli IV* provides a recyclable script with which individuals can use to reproach themselves in this never-ending cycle of devotion. If a reader can ask and defend himself against the soul’s adamant questions and accusations, and if his past actions confirm his answers, he is on the path to eternal salvation. This mode of response is key for liturgical literature, for it forces readers to complete a cycle of fear, guilt, self-evaluation, and finally preventative action through prayer and confession. As Brantley suggests, readers who can see themselves in a text can also attain a heightened self-consciousness in their devotional reading, both in their contemplation of what they are doing and in the careful consideration of how they are doing it.⁷⁹

And yet, while texts like *Vercelli IV* encourage individual introspection, they do not advance self-awareness as a value in itself. Instead, the inwardness that is cultivated through the homily’s dialogue and performative elements is done only to attain a deeper knowledge of God for the benefit of the eternal soul. Readers must not only internalize “þas word” (l. 184) (those words) of the homily, they must also use the text’s words meditate on their own sins and deeds within the world. The homilist stresses the need for this spiritual calibration by repeating the refrain “utan gepencan” (ll. 71; 75; 153; 337) (let us think) and “ongytaþ nu, me þa leofestan” (l. 57; 186) (understand now, dearly beloved) throughout the homily. When the homilist uses the phrase “utan” or “utan nu, leofstan men,” he is asking readers to ruminate on how their actions in

⁷⁸ Alan Sinfield, “Protestantism: Questions of Subjectivity and Control.” *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 159.

⁷⁹ Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, 14.

this world will affect their fate in the next. These self-referential refrains are interspersed throughout both homilies with a call for action (*utan don*) so that readers might combine good thoughts and good deeds. The homilist exhorts mankind to “earnian we us” (l. 17; 73) (let us earn), “geeaðmedden we us her to Gode” (l. 60) (Let us humble ourselves here to God), and “utan arian þam earmum” (l. 82-3) (let us honor the poor) to reiterate the importance of action as an essential next step after the ritual of self-examination. Frantzen argues that an essential criterion for drama is “gestures and words that knit the speaker’s world to that of the onlookers.”⁸⁰ Rambaran-Olm notes, however, that these performed gestures can occur outside of the text in a type of “inverted arrangement” when the function of the text is to incite audience participation.⁸¹ She uses as an example *John the Baptist’s Prayer*, in which the primary action of the text is to urge the audience towards baptism.⁸² In the same way, the primary function of *Vercelli IV* is to scare the reader into performing good works and penance by detailing the terror of Judgment Day. The homilist’s call to action in the previous paragraph signals readers to perform devotional gestures as they read— *wepan* (to weep), *scyldan* (to defend), *fæstan* (to fast), and *andettan* (to confess). These commands are speech acts whose function is to bring readers again and again to the ritual of confession and penance in an unending cycle. In adding these imperative commands, the homilist asks his audience to rehash and redeem their previous sins. Only after this process will readers be ready for Judgment Day and the final reckoning.

⁸⁰ Allen Frantzen, “Drama and Dialogue in OE Poetry,” 99. For other studies on gesture, performance, and the liturgy, see: Rambaran-Olm, *John the Baptist’s Prayer*, 98-102; C.R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Gestures and the Roman Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Helen Gittos also provides a fantastic examination of the relationship between ritual, gesture, and physical space and objects in “Rites for Dedicating Church in Anglo-Saxon England,” in *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 212-256.

⁸¹ M.R. Rambaran-Olm, *John the Baptist’s Prayer*, 99-100.

⁸² M.R. Rambaran-Olm, *John the Baptist’s Prayer*, 100.

Vercelli IV thus encourages readers to approach devotional media as spectators might approach a performance—with bodies and minds, as Jill Stevenson suggests, that are prepared to experience and digest nonrepresentational dramatic elements.⁸³ In the interest of expanding and enlivening the concept of “drama” within Anglo-Saxon literature, it seems appropriate to continue emphasizing the idea that OE poetry and prose can be theatrical even if we lack records of oral performance. Perhaps the next step is to examine how these dramatic elements in homilies like *Vercelli IV* can connect texts from the homiletic genre across manuscripts and miscellanies. Although homilies are often unified in their didactic and devotional rhetoric, the dramatic elements in *Vercelli IV* may suggest that they are also linked through a required mode of reading within the larger Vercelli Book—one that provides a dramatic script for its audience to enact within their individual devotional practice, and to perform onstage in a theatre of the mind. This article, above all, foregrounds the fact that reading *Vercelli IV* is not a passive, static process—it requires the medieval reader’s active participation when asked to reflect, imagine, and perform as they work through the narrative. It is essential to continue studying how these texts might affect and influence their readers to act; that we, as Carol Symes suggests, “remain aware of the possibilities.”⁸⁴

⁸³ Jill Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture*, 41.

⁸⁴ Carol Symes, “Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices,” in *Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation*, eds. Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2016), 244.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Mycel on mode: Interior and Exterior Spirituality in The Dream of the Rood

The thirteenth century Middle English alliterative prayer, *Be Wohunge of ure Lauerd*, located in the *Ancrene Wisse* in British Library, MS Cotton Titus D xviii, begins by addressing Christ as lover, lord, and savior:¹

Ihesu swete ihesu
mi druð
mi derling
mi drihtin
mi healend
mi huniter
mi haliwei
Swetter is munegunge of þe þen mildeu o muðe (ll. 1-8).²

(Jesus, sweet Jesus, my dearest, my darling, my lord, my savior, my honey drop, my healing balm. Sweeter is the memory of you than nectar in my mouth).

The poem is an extraordinary example of medieval affective prayer in which readers are moved emotionally and spiritually to praise Christ and visualize him on the Cross.³ To do so, as Sarah

¹ Sarah McNamer has argued that the *Wohunge* does not quite fit within a single devotional category—while it does contain a powerful meditation on the Crucifixion, it also contains an erotic fantasy in which the speaker imagines literally marrying Christ. As she goes on to note, the fact that this early text sits uneasily within traditional devotional genres allows scholars to examine the development of affective devotional literature. See further: Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 27.

² *The Wooing of Our Lord and The Wooing Group Prayers*, ed. and trans. Catherine Innes-Parker (Ontario: Broadview, 2015), 80-81. All subsequent line numbers for *Be Wohunge of ure Lauerd* will come from Innes-Parker's edition and translation.

³ As scholars like McNamer, Anne Savage, and Nicholas Watson have underscored, this text was written specifically for a female audience—the fact that it was written for and read by women is essential for examining the relationship between Christ and the first-person speaker, who seeks to unite herself with Christ in marriage. For more on this relationship, see further: McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, 25-57; Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson, eds., *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 255-257; Anne Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers*:

McNamer suggests in her work on late medieval affective piety, the *Wohunge* utilizes a series of paradigms that are typical of the genre; namely, “insisting on imaginative performance as a primary means of producing emotion, casting the reader as eyewitness to the events of the Passion as they unfold in relentless narrative sequence” and also using exclusively first person narration to give readers “an impassioned “I” to take up and make their own.”⁴ For example, when the speaker of the *Wohunge* imagines that she is present at the Crucifixion, the visual she conjures up pushes her to feel heart-wrenching pity and pain for her “deor lefmon lasteles” (l. 122) (dear blameless lover)—after seeing Christ on the Cross, she asks, “A hu liue i for reowðe þat seo mi mi lefmon up o rode/ ant swa todrahen hise limes þat i mai in his bodi euch ban tellen” (ll. 344-345) (Ah, how can I live for pity? I who seem for myself my beloved man upon the cross, and his limbs so stretched that I can count every bone in his body).⁵ This question, along with the frequent reminders that she is seeing the event take place within her own mind, foreground the visual nature of the poem. Her passionate response to these images, as indicated through the continuous yes of the apostrophic ‘ah’ throughout the text, in turn produces what

Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). For a concise overview of Bynum’s arguments regarding affective piety and female audience, see further: Caroline Walker Bynum, “...And Woman His Humanity: Female Imagery in the Religious Writing of the Later Middle Ages,” in *Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols*, Caroline Walker Bynum, Stevan Harrell, and Paula Richman, eds. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 257-288.

⁴ Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, 29.

⁵ It has been widely debated in scholarship whether the author of the *Wohunge* is female, and whether scholars should imagine the voice of the text as female. The theory that the author is a woman goes back to W. Meredith Thompson’s EETS edition. This view has been challenged by E.J. Dobson and more recently by Nicholas Watson. See further: Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 418-419. See also: E.J. Dobson, *The Origins of the Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 154; Chewning rightly goes on to suggest that “the biological sex of the author is really not at issue here at all. *Be Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* is a poem in which the persona or speaker is certainly female, or at the very least she describes herself using feminine pronouns” (122). Cf. Susannah Mary Chewning, “Mysticism and the Anchoritic Community: ‘A Time...of Veiled Infinity’,” in *Medieval Women in Their Communities*, ed. Diane Watt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 122-123.

McNamer calls “an experience of immediacy” in which the past and present coincide and merge—the spectacle of the Crucifixion, for the speaker, is transported into the present as she stands as both witness and participant.⁶ The speaker accordingly inserts herself into Christ’s narrative through her affective reactions, stating: “A hwat schal i nu don?/ Nu min herte mai to breke,/ min ehne flowen al o water./ A nu is mi lefmon demd for to deien” (ll. 329-331) (Ah, what shall I do now? Now my heart will surely shatter, my eyes all overflow with water. Ah, now is my lover condemned to die). By framing the event as cause for pity and sorrow, as McNamer notes, the *Wohunge* provides readers with a mechanism for envisioning and reading the Crucifixion that will maximize an affective response.⁷

The text has accordingly become for scholars a touchstone of affective literature in the Middle Ages, an archetype for late medieval meditations on the Passion that require readers to perform specific emotional responses as they envision devotional scenes. Unlike liturgical spectacle in which the reader is physically present for the re-enactment, affective meditations such as the *Wohunge* lead medieval readers to internalize their visions so that they can play them out within the mind. Moreover, as the colophon indicates, these visions are specifically meant to produce physical manifestations of emotions such as compassion, grief, and love:

“Prei for me mi leue suster.
 Bis haue I writen þe for þi þat wordes ofte quemen þe heorte to þenken on ure lauerd.
 And for þi hwen þu art on eise carpe toward iesu and seie þise wordes.

And þenc as tac he heng biside þe blodi up o rode.
 And he þurh his grace opne þin heorte to his luue
 and to reowðe of his pine” (p. 110).

(Pray for me, my dear sister. I have written you this because words often allure the heart to think on our Lord. And so, when you are at ease, talk to Jesus and say these words. And imagine that he hangs beside you, bloody, on the cross. And may he, through his grace, open your heart to his love, and to pity for his pain).

⁶ Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, 30.

⁷ Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, 29.

The phrase “hwen þu art on eise” is particularly noteworthy here, for it underscores that readers should turn inward to reflect on the Crucifixion and “þenc as tac he [Christ] heng biside þe” whenever they are alone. Through this colophon, it’s possible to imagine a devotee alone in private reading, watching in pity and horror as she imagines Christ on the Cross—as McNamer aptly suggests, even in modern readers this text “triggers an act of imagination, transporting us from a moment in the present, in a calm reading room amid a bustling modern metropolis...to a woman walled up in a cell, breaking the silence of this still place, speaking sweet terms of endearment to her lover in the familiar vernacular.”⁸ The colophon underscores the text’s iterability as a script for medieval readers—to be devotionally productive, they should specifically say “þise wordes” (these words) in the same order whenever they are at ease. It is accordingly the recitation of the text’s dialogue that allows readers to both access Christ’s Grace and to open up their hearts to Him.

Through the frequent reenactment of this script, the *Wohunge* productively links visibility, performance, and affect—it straddles the line between public and private by defining events like the Crucifixion as a spectacle to be performed in front of an audience, even though it paradoxically encourages readers to perform the spectacle within the confines of the interior self. Both the cast and the audience of the performance is the individual herself, who stages the scene on the mind-stage in order to cultivate productive affective responses. It is essential for us to remember that affective texts like the *Wohunge* can be both “flexible and capacious” as they push medieval readers to creatively reconstruct past events and ultimately inserting themselves as a character within their curated narrative.⁹ The texts themselves effectively become “intimate

⁸ Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, 26.

⁹ Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, 1-2.

scripts,” as McNamer suggests, that provide readers with a devotional path to Christ and salvation, which the reader then customizes or shapes as their own.

It is precisely the way in which the *Wohunge* connects visuality and affect together by asking individual readers to internally perform devotional spectacle that interests me in this chapter. While the *Wohunge* was written in the hey-day of late medieval affective piety, it is useful to use this text to examine earlier English iterations of affective meditation and devotion—specifically, how Old English texts employ the same rhetorical strategies and paradigms to guide readers towards productive reflection and devotional practice. McNamer’s theory of “intimate scripts” is also useful in this endeavor because it provides a framework for how texts literally script the performance of emotion through visual and structural means. My goal in this study is ultimately to push back against previous scholarship that relegates the cultivation of the inner life to the late Middle Ages.¹⁰ Through a close analysis of the Old English *Dream of the Rood*, which likewise contains an extended and vivid description of Christ on the Cross, I will instead argue that the Anglo-Saxon poet uses dramatic spectacle as a technology or mechanism for the performance of devotion in the same way as the late medieval *Wohunge*—specifically, that the reenactment and performance of the Crucifixion within the mind

¹⁰ Thomas Bestul, for example, argues that the middle of the eleventh century marks a “new concern for interior psychology and personality.” See further: Thomas Bestul, “Devotional and Mystical Literature,” in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographic Guide*, Frank Anthony, Carl Mantello, A.G. Rigg, eds. (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 695. See also: Anne Clark Beckett and Thomas H. Bestul, “Introduction,” in *Cultures of Piety: Medieval English Devotional Literature in Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999). S.J. Shoemaker, “Mary at the Cross, East and West: Maternal Compassion and Affective Piety in the Earliest *Life of the Virgin* and the High Middle Ages,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 62 (2011): 570-606; Jean LeClercq, “Sur la devotion à l’humanité du Christ,” *Revue Benedictine* 63 (1953): 128-130. Other scholars have argued against the timeline for affective piety, such as: Allen Frantzen, “Spirituality and Devotion in the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials,” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 22 (2005): 117-128; Scott DeGregorio, “Affective Spirituality: Theory and Practice in Bede and Alfred the Great,” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 22 (2005): 129-139.

ultimately leads medieval readers to move away from the world, to turn inward into the self, and to listen to Christ as Inner Teacher.

In the following sections, I begin by analyzing the *Dream*'s purpose as a script for individual readers—as part of the Vercelli Book, this poem was most likely meant to be read privately to engage the reader in reflection and meditation on the Cross.¹¹ After briefly outlining manuscript context and provenance, I turn to examine the spectacular and ekphrastic nature of the poem's descriptions. The goal of both the Rood and the Dreamer as co-narrators is to paint a simultaneously beautiful and bloody image of the Crucifixion that medieval readers can use to reenact the scene for themselves. When introducing his vision, for example, the Dreamer describes the tree as “wædum geweorðode, wynnum scinan,/ gegyred mid golde” (ll. 15-16a) (adorned with garments, shining with joys, girded with gold) and conversely “mid wætan bestemed” (l. 22b) (drenched with wetness [blood]) and “mid blod bestemed” (l. 48b) (drenched with blood). This contrast between gems and gore is sustained throughout the entire text, and becomes mirrored by the alternating emotional states of both the Dreamer and the Rood as they move between anguish for Christ's sacrifice and joy for his gift to mankind. The poem thus pulses with material richness, from the description of the Cross' bejeweled appearance, to the Cross' own description of Christ's death. The Cross's vision, filled as it is with a precise sequence of descriptive images, provides a paratactic path through the narrative for readers to follow. While the poem is simple in its didactic goal to bring the Dreamer and the reader to salvation, its framing of the Cross' vision within a larger dream vision ultimately produces a complex network of competing narratorial voices. Like *Vercelli IV* and the *Psychomachia*, it shifts between vivid imagery, dialogue, and exhortation—readers move from the spectacle of the

¹¹ It is worth pointing again to the similarities between the *Wooing* and the *Dream*. Both the *Wooing* and the *Dream* trigger this act of the imagination in order to transport the reader back into the past whenever they pick up and read the text.

blood-soaked Cross, to the Cross's first-person retelling of the Crucifixion, to the homilist's exhortation to "þas gesyhðe secge mannum" (l. 96b) (recite this vision for men).

After analyzing this intermixing of narration and imagery, I examine how the poem represents the relationship between dramatic spectacle and private devotion, returning yet again to my founding questions within this dissertation—how do medieval readers bring noisy, dramatic scenes into the private sphere as they read? And how do we understand the connection between the private sphere and the greater Christian community? The *Dream* begins with a strong sense of the separation between individual and community, as the Dreamer strives to make sense of his private dream vision that occurs away from *reordberend* (speech-bearers). And yet, this division later breaks down as the narratorial perspective pans in and out, shifting focus again and again from the Dreamer, to the Cross, to the entirety of mankind. Despite the affective nature of the vision, the movement inward is not sustainable for the Dreamer; instead of remaining entrenched within his dream and deep within meditation, he eventually awakens to spread his newfound knowledge with other *reordberend* (speech-bearers).¹² At the same time the poem demonstrates how devotees must spread Christian doctrine throughout the world, it also illustrates that knowledge of God and the soul can only be cultivated deep within the individual self through private meditation. I accordingly examine how the Dreamer grapples with this uneasy relationship between individual devotion and the duty to preach his vision to others within the community. Like Alfred's Agustinus who finds enlightenment by conversing with his own *Gesceadwisnes*, the turn inward into the self away from worldly noise is necessary for the Dreamer to fully see, understand, and experience the Crucifixion event.

In the *Dream*, the medieval reader is ultimately forced to move from his interiorized re-

¹² We saw this same trajectory in Alfred's translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies*, in which the *ic*-speaker continually pans back to the community and the earthly world amid his discussions on the soul and the interior self.

enactment of the dream vision back to the communal sphere just as the Dreamer does. Through the poem's narratorial and perspectival shifts, the reader uses the text as a script, I argue, to stand in for the unnamed dreamer (the *ic*) who witnesses Christ's death. And so, after being immersed in this vision and experiencing the Crucifixion through the Rood's eyes, the reader likewise "wakes up" at the end of the vision, and is left to incorporate what he or she has experienced into his or her devotional life. The act of reading and re-reading the poem, and envisioning the Dreamer's vision, in turn requires the medieval reader to become part of this discursive devotional loop that demands continual visualization, meditation, and rumination. It is ultimately only through this devotional loop that readers (like the Dreamer) "sigebeam secan mote" (l. 127) (might seek the victory-tree) to become "mycel on mode" (l. 130a) (great in spirit). Similar to my case studies in Chapter 2 and 3, the *Dream* in essence becomes a proto-morality play that provides readers with different perspectives or angles from which to experience the Crucifixion as a spectacular event. Just as the Dreamer is invited to reenact the drama of the Crucifixion within his vision, so too is the medieval reader invited to use the poem's ample descriptions to visualize and witness Christ on the Cross.

Context and Background:

Like *Vercelli IV*, the *Dream* survives uniquely within the late tenth-century *Vercelli Book*, although the poem itself was probably composed much earlier.¹³ In terms of provenance

¹³ On scholarship for dating the *The Dream of the Rood*, see further: Andy Orchard, "The Dream of the Rood: Cross-References," in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, Samantha Zacher and Andy Orchard, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), pp. 225-226; John Fleming, "The Dream of the Rood and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism," *Traditio* 22 (1966): 43-72; Patrick Conner, "The Ruthwell Monument Runic Inscription in an Eleventh Century Context," *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 59 (2007): 25-51; Jane Roberts, "Some Relationships between *The Dream of the Rood* and the Cross at Ruthwell," *Studies in Medieval English Language and Literature* 15 (2000): 1-25; *The Dream of the Rood*, Michael Swanton, ed. (Manchester: Manchester

and dating, scholars have based their estimates for an early poem date in part on the eighth century Ruthwell Cross, which features fourteen lines from the poem carved in runic inscriptions. The stone Cross is set in Dumfriesshire, and until the middle of the seventeenth century, it stood close to the altar at the parish church of Ruthwell. Éamon Ó’Carragáin has observed that although the runic poem on the Ruthwell Cross is related to the *Dream* and scholars have compared the two to mutually emend both texts, the differences between the two have also led scholars to classify them separately.¹⁴ This means that the date of the Ruthwell Cross cannot be mapped directly onto the *Dream*’s date or provenance. Orchard instead suggests that the inscriptions on the Cross seem to be an extract from a longer text that is similar to, but not identical to, the later *Dream* in the Vercelli Book. He argues persuasively that the two texts share parallel phrases and terms that indicate a “shared archetype,” indicating that at least parts of the *Dream* poem were circulating in the eighth century and that the heroic narrative was known and appreciated for over three centuries (at least in clerical and monastic settings).¹⁵ From the parallel phrasing between the *Dream* and the Ruthwell Cross, he goes on to argue that the narrative was most likely transmitted orally through a shared and memorized archetype. As we will see later in this chapter, the relationship between participating in the communal spectacle of the Ruthwell Cross, and interiorizing the spectacle while reading the *Dream* is crucial for our

University Press, 1970), 58-78. In 1642, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed the “Act annent Idolatrous monuments in Ruthwell,” which meant that the cross was broken into several pieces—the transom was buried within the churchyard and it seems as if other pieces were used as seating or paving set within the church. It was not until 1802 that some of the fragments were re-erected by Reverend Henry Duncan. The cross was eventually returned to the church and placed into a constructed apse, where it remains today. See further: Michael Swanton, *The Dream of the Rood*, 8-10.

¹⁴ For more on the relationship between the Ruthwell Cross and the *Dream*, see: Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of ‘The Dream of the Rood’ Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 304-338; A.S. Cook, *The Date of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912); A.S. Cook, “Notes on the Ruthwell Cross,” *PMLA* 17 (1902): 367-390.

¹⁵ See further: Andy Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross References,” 240-243.

understanding of the narrative at large. Not only was the story used in the Middle Ages within a public setting for veneration of the Cross, it was also used to incite interiority and self-consciousness in private when readers engaged with the *Dream*.

Scholars have argued that the poem was most likely originally written by a clerical or monastic author, even though its audience may well have included the laity.¹⁶ The *Dream* is situated in the Vercelli Book alongside two other incomplete poetic texts, *Homiletic Fragment I* and *Soul and Body I* (ff. 101v-106v).¹⁷ The poem begins on the sixth line of fol. 104v and finishes at the bottom of fol. 106v. Gathering XIV, which is ruled evenly with twenty-four lines per page, ends on fol. 104, and gathering XV, which is ruled with thirty-two lines per page, begins on fol. 105.¹⁸ Scholars have long debated the division and arrangement of the manuscript, primarily questioning whether the manuscript was compiled haphazardly, or whether the scribe or collector compiled it with a specific plan in mind.¹⁹ While space and time do not permit a deep study of the manuscript's arrangement, scholars have historically been divided as to whether the *Dream* was added later or was originally part of the manuscript's plan. Recently, the favored interpretation is for 'intelligent design' in which the scribe or collector was engaged in creating an anthology of private reading texts that display a distinct order and set of themes.²⁰

Among the poetic examples within this dissertation, the *Dream* is by far the most complex in genre and form. As Orchard suggests, it is as if the poet "seems deliberately to toy

¹⁶ Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of 'The Dream of the Rood' Tradition*, 2.

¹⁷ Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 30.

¹⁸ Mark Swanton, ed. *The Dream of the Rood* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1987), pp. 4-6.

¹⁹ For a detailed look at the manuscript's design and recent scholarship, see further: Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, 67-71. See also: Sisam, *Vercelli Book*, 20-38. See also my Chapter 2 on *Vercelli IV*.

²⁰ Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, 70-7.

with expectations, a trait that may have made the text all the more appreciated in its day.”²¹ This confusion occurs because of the shifting narratorial perspectives and also because of the poet’s manipulation of genre. The text is divided into three distinct sections that focus on three protagonists, respectively the Dreamer, the Cross, and Christ; the poet makes clear connections between all three of these figures, emphasizing that they are all bound together throughout the narrative.²² The first section of the poem runs from lines 1-27 in which the Dreamer introduces his vision and first describes the “sigebeam” (l. 13) (victory tree). In the second section, which runs from lines 28-121, the Rood takes over the poem’s narration and begins to describe his experience and sorrow of the Crucifixion, and ends with the Cross’ exhortation for the Dreamer to “þas gesyhðe secge mannum” (l. 96) (tell men about this vision). In the third and final section, from lines 122-156, the Dreamer awakens after this vision, reflects on what he has seen, and imagines a time in which he can shake off the fetters of the world and rejoin Christ in Heaven.

Orchard notes that the link between the Rood and Christ is cemented through their mutual suffering as those who were tortured during the Crucifixion; this link is further underscored by the Rood’s use of the dual *unc* (us two) in line 48a to describe himself and Christ as one entity against the “strange feondas” (l. 30b) (strong enemies) who do them harm.²³ He goes on to examine these links further in his detailed study of the poem’s perspectival shifts, arguing that

²¹ Andy Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross-References,” 228-229.

²² See further: Neil D. Isaacs, “Progressive Identifications: The Structural Principle of *The Dream of the Rood*,” in *Structural Principles in Old English Poetry* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1968), pp. 3-18; Constance B. Hieatt, “Dream Frame and Verbal Echo in *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 72 (1971), 251-263; Faith H. Patten, “Structure and Meaning in *The Dream of the Rood*,” *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 49 (1968): 385-401; N.A. Lee, “The Unity of *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Neophilologus* 56 (1972): 469-482. For another look at the links between the three characters, see: Edward B. Irving Jr., “Crucifixion Witnessed, or Dramatic Interaction in *The Dream of the Rood*,” 256-266; John Fleming, “*The Dream of the Rood* and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism,” 43-72.

²³ Andy Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross References,” 230-231. The line 48a reads: “Bysmerodon hie unc butu ætgædere” (they reviled us two both together).

the relationship between the Rood and the Dreamer, and subsequently the Dreamer and Christ, is highlighted through a series of clear rhetorical parallels.²⁴ Respectively, the Dreamer and the Rood are connected by repeated phrases like “Eall ic wæs sorgum gedrefed” (l.20b) (I was all afflicted with sorrows) and “Sære ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed” (l. 58b) (I was sorely afflicted with sorrows), while the Dreamer and Christ are linked when they both rest alone with a “mæte werede/weorode” (ll. 123b; 69b) (small company).²⁵ While Orchard suggests that the poet creates these connections for artistic effect, the consecutive verbal parallels that bind the Dreamer to the Rood, the Rood to Christ, and Christ to the Dreamer underscore the poem’s primary didactic function—namely, the production of compassion for Christ’s suffering on the Cross, and the subsequent affective emotions the Dreamer and the medieval reader produce as they feel this compassion.

The sheer complexity of the Vercelli Book’s *Dream* has made it an ideal text on which to sharpen lexical and structural tools of analysis. The poem has indeed resisted many of the categories and interpretations that medieval scholars have sought to impress upon it over the years. It has been examined for its structural unity, its meter, its genre, its place within the Vercelli manuscript, and its relationship to other Vercelli Book texts.²⁶ The benefit of scholarship’s emphasis on structure, style, and rhetoric has been a growing understanding and appreciation of the poem’s artistry. And yet, as Orchard has observed, basic questions surrounding its genre, didactic goals, and its position within Anglo-Saxon literature remain.²⁷ While it has been shown that the poem is drawing on a wide range of liturgical and Germanic

²⁴ Andy Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross References,” 230-233.

²⁵ Andy Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross References,” 232.

²⁶ For an in-depth list of the major scholarship on the *Dream* by genre, see further: Britt Mize, “The Mental Container and the Cross of Christ: Revelation and Community in *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (2010): 131-135.

²⁷ Andy Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross-References,” 228-229.

tropes, the *Dream* provides an original treatment of the Crucifixion scene that has no direct sources or analogues in the Old English corpus, its Latin sources, or indeed the Bible itself. As has been observed, the poem is closely tied to the broader themes within the Vercelli Book, including the penance, Judgment Day, and Marian theology.²⁸ The variety within the poem's thematic structure in turn makes it difficult to untangle the text's place within a specific genre. And yet, even though the question of the poem's genre is notoriously difficult to answer, especially because it is told from multiple perspectives and moves from dream vision to homiletic exhortation, it's worth lingering within these fissures to better map out the poem's devotional arc.

The center or crux of the text is Christ's Passion, with the Cross mediating the spectacle for the observers, the Dreamer and the readers.²⁹ Scholars have long argued that the poem is linked thematically and doctrinally with early liturgy.³⁰ As Elaine Treharne has persuasively suggested, the poem is "intimately linked" with the Lenten period and Easter, and the poet navigates Christ's death through the Dreamer's reaction and experience with the presented vision.³¹ In Judith Holloway's work on liturgy and the *Dream*, she explores the poem's connection with the *Adoratio Crucis* ceremony during Easter, which took place on Good Friday

²⁸ See, for example, Earl R. Anderson, "Liturgical Influences in 'The Dream of the Rood'," *Neophilologus* 73 (1989), 293-304; Thomas D. Hill, "The Cross as Symbolic Body: An Anglo-Latin Liturgical Analogue to 'The Dream of the Rood'," *Neophilologus* 77 (1993), 297-301; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "*Vidi Aquam*: The Liturgical Background to 'The Dream of the Rood' 20a: 'Swætan on þa swiðran healfe,'" *Notes and Queries* 30 (1983), 8-15; Mary Dockray-Miller, "The Feminized Cross of 'The Dream of the Rood'," *Philological Quarterly* 76 (1997), 1-18.

²⁹ Elaine Treharne, "'Hiht wæs geniwad': Rebirth in *The Dream of the Rood*," *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, eds. Catherine Karkov, Sarah Keefer, Karen Louise Jolly (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 145.

³⁰ H.R. Patch, "Liturgical Influence on *The Dream of the Rood*," *PMLA* 34 (1919): 233-257; Rosemary Woolf, "Doctrinal Influences on *The Dream of the Rood*," 138-153; J.V. Fleming, *The Dream of the Rood and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism*, *Traditio* 22 (1966): 43-72; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "Crucifixion as Anunciation: The Relation of *The Dream of the Rood* to the Liturgy Reconsidered," *English Studies* 53 (1982): 487-505.

³¹ Elaine Treharne, "'Hiht wæs geniwad': Rebirth in *The Dream of the Rood*," 145.

with both the clergy and the congregation coming together to adore and kiss the Cross.³² In connection with this liturgical ritual, the *Dream* poem asks readers to consecrate the Rood by moving through its humble beginnings as a mere tree in the forest to the moment it became the tool for Christ's death.³³ Holloway observes that the poem's focus on the Rood as protagonist is linked to liturgical practices of substituting the Rood for Christ—this we see in the *Adoratio Crucis* that can be found in both the *Book of Cerne* and the *Regularis Concordia*.³⁴ In his work on liturgical drama, O.B. Hardison underscores how the focus on the Rood in the *Adoratio Crucis* as subject and object becomes both cathartic and didactic for medieval readers, who increasingly feel as if they are witnessing the events of the Crucifixion in real time.³⁵ Both the *Adoratio Crucis* ceremony and the *Dream* poem achieve this reaction by encouraging readers to concentrate their veneration on the Rood itself, whether by venerating a physical object like the Ruthwell Cross or by glorifying an image of the Cross that readers conjure within their minds.

The fact that the *Dream* narrative has been incorporated into physical works of art such as the Ruthwell Cross throughout the early Middle Ages indicates that the poem's visual nature was especially appreciated. Calvin Kendall suggests in his excellent study of the Ruthwell Cross that the towering stone structure functions as a sign (or a beacon) for medieval devotees which enriches the viewer's experience of devotion through its size, spatial orientation, and vivid

³² Judith Holloway, "'The Dream of the Rood' and Liturgical Drama," *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1984): 19-37. For an extensive look at what the *Adoratio Crucis* entails in early Christian history, see further: Karl Young, *The Dramatic Associations of the Easter Sepulchre* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1920), 18-28.

³³ Rosemary Woolf, "Doctrinal Influences on *The Dream of the Rood*," 137-138; 149-152.

³⁴ Judith Holloway, "'The Dream of the Rood' and Liturgical Drama," 30-31.

³⁵ He goes on to argue that medieval audiences took on a range of roles when they experienced these narratives and ceremonies: "the congregation can be the Hebrews listening to prophecies of the Messiah, the crowd witnessing the Crucifixion...and the elect mystically incorporated into the body of Christ." See further: O.B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages: Essays in the Origin and Early History of Modern Drama* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1965), 44.

coloring.³⁶ Engaging with the Ruthwell Cross was a deeply physical activity, and individual viewers would experience the Cross' message differently based on environmental factors such as where they were standing, the position of the sun, and the specific time of day.³⁷ This active engagement in accessing and reading the Cross in turn mirrors the daily devotional program for devotees in which parts of the day were devoted to specific prayers and rituals. The runic and Latin inscriptions supplement this experience for the viewer, who would be able to combine the words and iconographic panels for a fuller visual/auditory effect.³⁸ On the Ruthwell Cross, the inscriptions frame the carved images, running up and around the Cross in an arc—the layout of the carvings and inscriptions encourages viewers to move from left to right, as they work their way around the cross clockwise from north to west.³⁹ The designer of the Cross fused together

³⁶ See further: Calvin Kendall, "From Sign to Vision: The Ruthwell Cross and *The Dream of the Rood*," in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, eds. Catherine E. Karkov, Sarah Keefer, Karen Jolly (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 129-230. For the Rood's coloring in the *Dream*, see: James Smith, "The Garments that Honour the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1975): 29-35.

³⁷ Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 280-283.

³⁸ For an excellent and thorough examination of the Ruthwell Cross and its connection to the *Dream* poem, see further: Calvin Kendall, "From Sign to Vision: The Ruthwell Cross and *The Dream of the Rood*," 129-144. See also: Andy Orchard, "*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross-References," 225-253; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "The Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem in its Iconographic and Liturgical Contexts," *Peritia* 6-7 (1987-1988): 1-71, and "Seeing, Reading, Singing the Ruthwell Cross: Vernacular Poetry, Old Roman Liturgy, Implied Audience," *Medieval Europe* (1992): 91-96, and Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of 'The Dream of the Rood' Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Paul Meyvaert, "A New Perspective on the Ruthwell Cross: *Ecclesia and Vita Monastica*," in *The Ruthwell Cross: Papers from the Colloquium Sponsored by the Index of Christian Art*, Brendan Cassidy, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 95-166.

³⁹ For a detailed description of the panels and the movement between images and inscriptions, see further: Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "The Vercelli Book as a Context for *The Dream of the Rood*," in *Transformations in Anglo-Saxon Culture: Toller Lectures on Art, Archaeology, and Text*, ed. Gale Owen-Crocker and Charles Inley (Oxford: Oxbow, 2017), 109-113. See also: Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of 'The Dream of the Rood' Tradition*, 280-297. Rosemary Cramp observes that "it is unique in Anglo-Saxon cross sculpture to have inscriptions which surround the whole of each image, instead of being just a label across or a single long inscription." See further: Rosemary Cramp, "Editorial Addendum to

word and image so that the inscriptions do not merely function as captions, but as links between consecutive image sequences. In his excellent work on the *tituli*, O’Carragáin accordingly argues that the Latin and runic inscriptions underscore that each of the Cross’ four sides cannot be read in a vacuum, but must be interpreted together for viewers to retrieve the full narrative.⁴⁰ He adds that the *tituli* “add a vital fourth dimension: time. They proclaim the single unifying metaphor behind the programme of the broad sides.”⁴¹ Once viewers have pieced together the four sides to form a linear narrative, they are able to step back and be reminded that all four sides combine to form the true Cross—in this way, each side and corresponding images always refer back to the Crucifixion event as the culmination of God’s grace and gift to mankind.

In her work on visuality and inscription, Jennifer O’Reilly provides an excellent definition of this ekphrastic process which resonates with the interweaving of image and text on the Ruthwell Cross and in the *Dream* poem: “it brings the larger context or significance of the subject before the inner eye, engaging the attention of the viewer and eliciting a response, sometimes by presenting a puzzle, worldplay, or paradox, and especially by calling to mind other images, texts, and ideas already in the viewer’s memory.”⁴² In terms of visuality and framing, the Ruthwell Cross and the *Dream* are logically consistent; both provide the viewer/reader with an interactive series of images as the Crucifixion scene unfolds that incite affective responses. To interpret the *Dream* is thus not dissimilar to the way that these stone crosses would be interpreted—the difference is that viewers engage with the Ruthwell Cross in the public sphere, while piecing together the image sequences within the *Dream* occurs privately, away from the

Paul Meyvaert, ‘Necessity Mother of Invention: A Fresh Look at the Rune Verses on the Ruthwell Cross’,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 41 (2013): 414.

⁴⁰ Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 285-286.

⁴¹ Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 286.

⁴² Jennifer O’Reilly, “‘Know Who and What He Is’: The Context and Inscriptions of the Durham Gospels Crucifixion Image,” in *Making and Meaning in Insular Art*, ed. R. Moss (Dublin, 2007), 301-316, at 316.

community as they read and within the space of the mind. As we will see below, just as the inscriptions and carvings on the Ruthwell Cross flow seamlessly around their physical structure, so too do the dialogue and ekphrastic descriptions within the *Dream* move readers through the spectacle of the Crucifixion. The stone Cross and the poem both intrinsically imply a succession of frames which readers/viewers must ultimately assemble, internalize, and interpret in order to fully understand the vision.

Dream Vision and Sight in *The Dream of the Rood*:

One of the key elements of the *Dream*'s affective nature is its focus on visibility—or, the constant shifting of imagery and narratorial perspective that is similar to the Ruthwell Cross' quick succession of carved frames. The *Dream* is one of the earliest examples of the vision genre that we have in English.⁴³ As A.C. Spearing notes, scholars often describe early dream visions as “serious, educative visions.”⁴⁴ Kevin Marti observes that in medieval devotional dream visions,

⁴³ For more on the *Dream* as the earliest dream vision, see further: Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross-References,” 233; Kevin Marti, “Dream Vision,” in *A Companion to Old and Middle English Literature*, eds. Laura Lambdin, Robert Lambdin, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 178; Bruce Mitchell and Fred Robinson, *A Guide to Old English*, 5th edn. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 240-241; John D. Niles, *Old English Literature: A Guide to Criticism with Selected Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), p. 254. The following is a select list of scholarship on the dream vision genre and medieval dreaming: Constance Hieatt, *The Realism of Dream Visions: The Poetic Exploitation of the Dream Experience in Chaucer and his Contemporaries*,” *De Proprietatibus Litterarum Series Practica 2* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967); A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Steven Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Kathryn Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literature 14* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Jacqueline Miller, “Dream Visions of *Auctoritas*,” *Poetic License: Authority and Authorship in Medieval and Renaissance Contexts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 34-72; Russell Stephen, *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988); Russell Stephen, “Meaningless Dreams and Meaningful Poems: The Form of the Medieval Dream Vision,” *Massachusetts Studies in English 7* (1980): 20-32.

⁴⁴ A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 125.

dreamers tend to embark on a journey that is ultimately “rooted in the return of the soul to God after death (*regressus animae*) and for the resurrection of the body.”⁴⁵ For dreamers, their visions thus often mimic the journey that their souls will take after death when they will rejoin God permanently or descend into Hell. In the Old English *Guthlac A*, for example, the saint both ascends to Heaven and descends into Hell during his dream sequence, experiencing two visionary journeys during the course of the poem.⁴⁶ In regards to textual structure, a typical medieval dream vision begins in the waking life of the dreamer in which the reader is first offered the hint of a crisis or problem that will beget the dream to come. The dreamer consequently moves through the vision, often saving his or her reflection until the end when they exit the dream and return to the waking world.⁴⁷

In the opening sequence of the Old English *Dream*, we are given little context or information about the dreamer and his psychological state. Instead, after hailing his audience with a quick “Hwæt” (Listen) that is typical of certain types of OE poetry, he launches directly into the dream narrative. The Dreamer seems to enter the dream in stages—he is first only able to see the Rood, almost as if the scene before his eyes is set on mute. Within the first 25 lines alone,

⁴⁵ Kevin Marti, “Dream Vision,” 179. See also: Mary Carruthers, “Dream vision, picture, and “the mystery of the bed chamber,” in *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Imagery, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 171-220.

⁴⁶ A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 125. For an edition of *Guthlac*, see: Bernard Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, Vol. 1 (Exeter, 1994), 111-159.

⁴⁷ Marti has also argued that scholars have historically understood the dream vision as a “metagenre” that subsumes a variety of other genres—he observes, “Many texts viewed primarily as dream visions today have at earlier stages of their critical reception been regarded principally as examples of allegory, elegy, autobiography, debate, or other genres.” As such, the *Dream* is also a series of dramatic soliloquies, like we see in *Vercelli IV* and Alfred’s *Soliloquies*, with the protagonists offering readers a template for private devotion; it is homiletic, with the Dreamer and the Rood’s call for mankind to meditate on the Crucifixion while they still have time on earth; and it is also enigmatic like the Old English Riddles, with its extended use and manipulation of prosopopoeia. See further: Kevin Marti, “Dream Vision,” 179. For a detailed and compelling look at how the *Dream* shifts between the vision, homiletic, and enigmatic genre, see: Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross-References,” 236-237.

there are 8 references to vision, sight, and seeing:⁴⁸

Table 4.1—Sight and Vision Words in the *Dream*, lines 1-25.

Old English	Modern English
“Ic gesawe syllicre treow” (l. 4a)	(I saw a more wonderful tree)
“ Beheoldon þær engel dryhtnes ealle” (l. 9b)	(all beheld the angel of the Lord there)
“ac hine þær beheoldon halige gastas” (l. 11)	(but the holy spirits beheld it there)
“ Geseah ic wuldres treow” (l. 14b)	(I saw the tree of glory)
“Hwæðre ic þurh þæt gold ongytan meahte” (l. 18)	(Nevertheless through that gold I was able to perceive/see)
“forht ic wæs for þære fægran gesyhðe ” (l. 21a)	(I was frightened by that beautiful vision)
“ Geseah ic þæt fuse beacen” (l. 21b)	(I saw that eager beacon)
“ beheold hreowcearig hælendes treow” (l. 25a)	(I sorrowfully beheld the tree of the Lord)

Orchard noted this emphasis on sight and vision in the beginning of the *Dream*, which is a common theme for the medieval dream vision genre.⁴⁹ He notes that within the entire poem, the phrase “Geseah ic” (I saw) occurs four times, always in the b-line, while the term “gesyhðe” (vision) occurs four times, always in the a-line.⁵⁰

Despite this heavy emphasis on sight and seeing within the *Dream*, the Dreamer initially

⁴⁸ I created the following chart using Orchard’s excellent study of *The Dream of the Rood*. Orchard notes the poem’s focus on sight by listing the occurrences of “Geseah ic” and “gesyhðe.” He footnotes the other occurrences of “beheoldan” and “ongytan.” See further: Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross References,” 233-234; n. 31.

⁴⁹ Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross References,” 233.

⁵⁰ For “Geseah ic,” see: ll. 14b; 21b; 33b; 51b. For “gesyhðe,” see: ll. 21a; 41a; 66a; 96a. See further: Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross-References,” 233-234.

seems unable to parse what is before his eyes.⁵¹ The foreignness of the Rood as spectacle is specifically emphasized here; in line 4, for example, he states in the subjunctive: “þuhte me þæt ic gesawe syllicre treow” (It seemed to me that I saw a strange tree).⁵² This phrasing is repeated on line 13a when he again states, “Syllic wæs se sigebeam” (Strange was that victory-tree).⁵³ Indeed, the Rood seems to constantly shift between a series of different descriptors, never quite staying in the same guise or color.⁵⁴ The *sigebeam* becomes for the Dreamer a shining golden “beacen” (l. 7b) (beacon), which continues to waver in and out of focus, at once “wædum geweorðode” (l. 15a) and “beswyled mid swates gange” (l. 23a) (soiled with the coursing of sweat). Even with these conflicting descriptions, the Dreamer is eventually able to perceive more layers of the vision as he continues to inspect the tree; he comes to recognize the deeper meaning underneath the adorned golden layer when he “þurh þæt gold ongytan meahte/ earma ærgewin þæt hit ærest ongan/ swætan on þa swiðran healfe” (ll. 18-20b) (through that gold was able to perceive the former agony of the wretched ones, so that it first began to bleed then on the right half).⁵⁵ The act of perception here is signaled by the verb *ongytan*, which Bosworth-Toller

⁵¹ For an in-depth look at the connection between the poem and the Riddle genre, where we often see this delayed release of a poem’s subject, see further: Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross-References,” 236-237.

⁵² The Rood is described using the following pattern always in the b-lines of each verse: “syllicre treow” (strange tree), “wuldres treow” (tree of glory), and “wealdendes treow” (the wielder’s tree) respectively in lines 4b, 14b, and 17b.

⁵³ As Irving has suggested, there seems to be a paradox in this opening, for as the Dreamer takes in more of the Rood within the vision, he is less able to concretely describe its nature Edward B. Irving Jr., “Crucifixion Witnessed, or Dramatic Interaction in The Dream of the Rood,” qtd. in John D. Niles, “Saints’ Lives and Christian Devotion,” in *Old English Literature: A Guide to Criticism with Selected Readings* (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell & Sons, 2016), pp. 256-266, at 258.

⁵⁴ Andy Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross References,” 245-246.

⁵⁵ Edward B. Irving, “Crucifixion Witnessed, or Dramatic Interaction in The Dream of the Rood,” 258-259. Here, as Rosemary Woolf has argued, we see the combination of two Crucifixion tropes—on one hand, the event as joyful and indicative of Christ’s victory over sin, and on the other hand, the event as a representation of human suffering and torture. See further:

translates as “to perceive (by sight or hearing); to feel; and to recognize.”⁵⁶

Of this passage, Paul Szarmach succinctly asks, “Does the dreamer have a special way of looking or understanding within his mental faculties?”⁵⁷ And like Szarmach goes on to suggest, I would argue that he absolutely does. The ekphrastic imagery of the Cross serves to make the *Dream* into what Bede calls “viva scriptura” (living writing), glossed from the Greek “pictura.”⁵⁸ The visuality is the most important aspect of the Rood’s narrative because it is only through this “living writing” that the Rood can successfully translate the glory of Christ’s Crucifixion to the Dreamer (and by transitive property the medieval reader). As Szarmach observes, it is essential that “the dreamer does not ‘read’ (*rædan*) what he views, nor does he ‘scrutinize’ (*sceawian*)...The vision *qua* vision may empower the dreamer to perceive what he perceives, and in this way the transference of moral meaning takes place.”⁵⁹ The Dreamer is able to internalize these images within this vision and use them to both meditate on Christ and take what he has learned back into the community. After the Rood takes over the narration, the Rood directs and guides the Dreamer through the dynamic images so that he does not become puzzled or lost in confusion.

Rosemary Woolf, “Doctrinal Influences on *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Medium Ævum*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (1958): 138-153, at 151-152.

⁵⁶ Bosworth, Joseph. “An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online.” *On-gitan*. Ed. Thomas Northcote Toller and Others. Comp. Sean Christ and Ondřej Tichý. Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, 19 July 2010. Web. 1 May 2017.

⁵⁷ Paul Szarmach, “*The Dream of the Rood* as Ekphrasis,” in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed A.J. Minnis and J. Roberts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 267-288, at 285.

⁵⁸ Szarmach, “*The Dream of the Rood* as Ekphrasis,” 278. Szarmach also suggests that this living writing “crosses the visual-verbal line” (288), and cites Bede’s, *De templo* II, ed. by David Hurst, CCSL, 119A (Turnhout, 1969), 212–13. As he also suggests, “The visual and verbal have a unique congruence in this poem, where the visual/material is embodied in words” (286).

⁵⁹ Szarmach, “*The Dream of the Rood* as Ekphrasis,” 285-286.

In the *Dream*, as Orchard suggests, is it almost as if the poet “is offering us a series of alternative perspectives, a kaleidoscopic and necessarily fractured vision of a wonder that cannot be completely encompassed.”⁶⁰ In other words, like the image of the soul in Prudentius’ *Psychomachia*, the *Dream* seeks to present to readers something that cannot be entirely expressed or understood through language. While mankind can understand the Crucifixion as a past event, they are unable to fully access or experience it while still on earth. The dynamic images within poems like the *Dream* nevertheless provide the visionary with a means to grasp the devotional power of the event. The shifting narrators within the text in turn act as mediators who structure and present these images to readers through the text’s dream vision framework.⁶¹ In this way, the viscosity is the key to the affective power of the *Dream*, which provides readers with the means to visualize and remember the vivid Crucifixion, and to fully imagine themselves within the event as witnesses. The boundaries between ‘seeing’, ‘perceiving’ and ‘reading’ become fluid just as the reader turns his or her gaze inward and sees with, what Alfred calls in the OE *Soliloquies*, the *modes eagan* (eyes of the mind). Szarmach aptly observes that for the Dreamer (and in turn the medieval reader), “‘Reading’ and ‘seeing’ do not convey, separately or together, the special act of understanding that the poet has described and explained and that in turn explains the full power of *The Dream of the Rood*.”⁶² It is the act of retreating into the self to perform out the narrative’s imagery and dialogue within the mind, much as the Dreamer does

⁶⁰ Andy Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross-References,” 229. See further: Kevin Marti, “Dream Vision,” 182-184.

⁶¹ Perhaps it is for this reason that the poem is an amalgamation or hybrid of genres and forms, which offers readers a curious intermixing of dramatic soliloquy, inner *visio*, ekphrastic poem, and homily. It is this generic blurring that creates a productive script or template for readers in their private devotion; it is a mixing of tools and strategies that allow the reader to meditate on the Crucifixion most effectively.

⁶² Paul Szarmach, “*The Dream of the Rood* as Ekphrasis,” 288.

when he retreats into his vision away from *reordberend* (speech-bearers), that characterizes the poem's true didactic function for devotees.

It is striking, moreover, that the moment of *ongytan* and *sceawian* explicitly precede moments in which the Dreamer reacts affectively to the violence of the Crucifixion spectacle. While he initially sees the Rood in all its beauty, “wædum geweorðode wynnum scinan” (l. 15) (adorned with garments, shining with joys), he is slowly able to see the first, he recognizes that he himself is “mid synnum fah/ forwunded mid wommum” (ll. 13b-14a) (stained with sins, wounded with impurities), and second, he states for the first time that he was “mid sorgum gedrefed...for þære fægran gesyhðe” (l. 20b-21a) (drenched with sorrows...frightened by that vision) after seeing the Rood. It is only after he recognizes his own sinful nature, around line 26, that he is able to finally hear the Rood's voice in combination with this shining vision: “Hwæðre ic þær licgende lange hwile/ behold hreowcearig hælendes treow/ oððæt ic gehyrde þæt hit hleoðrode” (ll. 24-26) (Yet as I lay there a long while/ I beheld sorrowfully the tree of the Lord/ until I heard it utter a sound).

The *Dream* here foregrounds the relationship between visibility and affect by explicitly defining the Crucifixion as a public event or spectacle performed in front of an audience. The vision's function is evident within the Rood's first lines when he takes over narration, stating: “Genaman me ðær strange feondas/ geworhton him þær to wæfersyne” (ll. 30b-31a) (Strong enemies seized me there, made me a spectacle for themselves there).⁶³ It's worth pausing to take a closer look at the compound *wæfersyne* here, defined as “a sight; show; or spectacle,” because

⁶³ Here we see one of the first direct biblical allusions, to Luke 23.48. “Et omnis turba eorum, qui simul aderant ad spectaculum istud, et videbant quae fiebant, percutientes pectora sua revertabantur” (And all the multitude of them that came together to that spectacle, and saw the things that were being done, reverted to striking their breasts). All Vulgate quotations are from: *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*, ed. Swift Edgar (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

it indicates the poet's use of drama and performance as productive devotional tools.⁶⁴ The OE word often glosses the Latin *spectaculum* "a public sight or show; a stageplay; the place whence plays are witnessed"; it occurs 43 times in both prose and verse in the Old English corpus, with the majority of instances describing the death of Christ and the martyrs in Aelfric's *Lives of Saints* and in the glosses of Aldhelm's *De Virginitate*.⁶⁵ To my knowledge, the *Dream* is the only extant poetic text within the corpus that contains this term. If we first examine the concept of *wæfersyne* with the patristic sources on *spectacula* in mind, it's possible to better situate the term's position within the poem.

Patristic authors typically divide the concept of the *spectaculum* into two major categories—the secular and the holy.⁶⁶ The term presents an ideological paradox, for while patristic authors like Augustine abhor the vice-ridden displays at the theaters and amphitheaters, they also recognize the power of the spectacle to both draw and move audiences.⁶⁷ The use of

⁶⁴ Bosworth, Joseph, "An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online." *Wæfer-sín*, Thomas Northcote Toller et. al, eds., Sean Christ and Ondřej Tichý, comp. Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, 21 Mar. 2010. Web. 30 Apr. 2017. For the Latin *spectaculum*, see: C.T. Lewis, Charles Short, "Spectaculum," *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1879).

⁶⁵ *Wæfersyn* is used explicitly to gloss *spectaculum* three separate times in Aldhelm's *De Laude Virginitatis*. It is also glossed once for *spectaculum* in the Antwerp Glossaries, dated by Ker to the first half of the eleventh century. The Aldhelm glosses can be found in: Aldhelm, "*De Laude Virginitatis* and *Epistola ad Ehfriðum*," in *The Old English Glosses of MS. Brussels Royal Library 1650*, Brussels Verhandelingen van de koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren (Brussels, 1974), p. 36. The Antwerp gloss is transcribed in: Lowell Kindschi, "The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus Museum, 47+ London, British Library, Add. 32246 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1955), 201-252. See further: N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, Vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), §2 and §165.

⁶⁶ See further: Donalee Dox, *The Idea of the Theater in Latin Christian Thought: Augustine to the Fourteenth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 12

⁶⁷ Tertullian, for example, places secular spectacles into categories, from horse races to the spectacles put on by magistrates. See: Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, 1 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1954), IX.1-X.1. For further discussion, see: Michael Foley, "A Spectacle to the World: The Theatrical Meaning of Augustine's *Soliloquies*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2014): 243-260. See also: K.A. Smith, "Staging the Incarnation: Revisioning Augustine's Critique of Theatre," *Literature and Theology* 15:2 (June

spectacula was simultaneously dangerous and appealing; it could easily be a sinful lure—an event that moved or touched the emotions of viewers in the wrong way—but it could also produce powerful affective responses in Christian devotees. The compromise for Augustine, so that he could capitalize on the potency of public spectacle within his own writing, is to offer up dramatic Christian events as alternatives to secular displays of lust and wantonness.⁶⁸

Consequently, as Augustine continually points out within his works, attending the theater or the gladiatorial games moves people away from the divine and pushes them towards worshipping earthly pleasure; and yet, spending time contemplating a dramatic spectacle such as the Eucharist is deeply spiritually productive.⁶⁹

In opposition to negative or sinful *spectacula*, devotional spectacles took place within the Church and were most often based on the miracles of saints and on divine revelations from God. Augustine typically focuses on Christian spectacle in his *Sermones*, which in detailing the lives

2001): 123–39.

⁶⁸ The idea of a productive *spectaculum* has its roots in the Bible. Christianity is evangelical by its very nature, requiring that its followers witness and experience events and spread their observations across the world, publically preaching the Word of God. John 1.3 perfectly demonstrates the New Testament’s insistence on public proclamation: “quod vidimus et audivimus, annuntiamus vobis, ut et vos societatem habeatis nobiscum,” (that which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us). This idea of public spectacle is reinforced again in 1 Corinthians 4.9: “Puto enim quod Deus nos apostolos novitiam ostendit, tanquam morti destinatos: quia spectaculum facti sumus mundo, et angelis, et hominibus” (For I think that God hath set forth us apostles, the last, as it were men appointed to death; we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men). *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*, eds. Edgar Swift and Angela Kinney (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). For another edition, see: *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, eds. Robert Weber et al. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983).

⁶⁹ In Augustine’s *Sermon 301a*, for example, which is contemporaneous with the *Confessions*, he even directly compares theatrical spectacles with the Eucharist: “Compare the pleasures and allurements of the theaters with that of this holy spectacle. There eyes are defiled, here hearts are cleansed. Here spectators are to be praised if they become imitators; where there the spectator is a base, and the imitator, infamous. Augustine, *Sermons: The Works of Saint Augustine*, John Rotelle, ed., Edmund Hill, trans. (New York: New City Press, 1994), 301A. Augustine, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Sermones in epistolas apostolicas, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2008), 313A.

of martyrs and saints, provided Christians with praiseworthy models to imitate in their own devotion. In *Sermo* 51.2, for example, he says regarding the act of martyrdom: “magnum spectaculum praebet oculis cordis integer animus, corpore dissipato” (a great spectacle offers to the eyes of the mind an untouched soul, while the body is scattered).⁷⁰

In her work on the body and punishment, Katherine O’Brien similarly explores the readability of the body as sign in Anglo-Saxon law, focusing “on the use to which the body is put in juridical discourse,” especially those bodies who are mutilated and punished for crimes.⁷¹ Citing a Latin Wulfstan poem that discusses the productivity of King Edgar’s judicial decisions, she states: “the efficacy of punishment resides in the spectacle of the mutilated bodies... which proclaims both the guilt of the bodies and the just power of the king... the spectacle, as Wulfstan defines it, resides in the show of the altered body itself.”⁷² O’Brien O’Keefe goes on to observe that this relationship between spectacle and body is slightly different from what Foucault argues in his *Discipline and Punish*, in which the spectacle largely consists of the community watching the event (and finally understanding the power of the prince as mediator and ruler), rather than in

⁷⁰ Augustine, *Sermo*, 51.2. As Paul Hyams suggests in his work on public trials, “the *spectaculum* presented a visible sign ‘so that the rest seeing this might be freed from their incredulity through God’s mercy’.” See further: Paul Hyams, “Trial by Ordeal: the Key to Proof in Early Common Law,” in *On the Laws and Customs of England: Essays in Honor of Samuel E. Thorne*, M.S. Arnold *et al*, eds. (Chapel Hill, 1981), p. 111. Within this quote, Hyams cites *Ordo*, II.4; cf. *ordines* VII.24; X.2.204. See further: Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols. (Hall, 1903-16): II, 406-407. From the *Ordo*: “et ut caeteri videntes ab incredulitate sua, te miserante, liberantur” (that the rest, seeing this, might be freed from their disbelief). My citation of Hyams, along with the above *Ordo* citation, is cited from: Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, “Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” *Anglo-Saxon England*, Vol. 27 (1998), 223-224, note 50.

⁷¹ See further: Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, “Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” 209-232, at 209.

⁷² Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, “Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” 227-228.

the physical marking of body itself.⁷³ The body thus takes on a new importance in O'Brien O'Keefe's understanding of the Old English judicial narratives—as the sign that is read by the audience, the body is the key to fully understanding the spectacle correctly and to acquiring “*post-factum* knowledge” about the event.⁷⁴ Despite the power of the tortured body to show God's Truth, Augustine similarly qualifies his use of devotional spectacles by advising devotees about how to best see or read the event—in *Sermo* 51, for example, he goes on to differentiate between those viewers who observe a martyr's death only with topical emotion, and those who listen with their spirits, “*mirantes fidei integritatem*” (marveling at the completeness of faith). Uninformed viewers accordingly “*spectant, miseros putantes eos martyres...detestantes eos et exhorrentes*” (look on, considering those wretched martyrs...abominating and being terrified at them), and thus only respond with terror and do not meditate or reflect upon the event itself. Informed viewers, meanwhile, read these scenes and “*libenter spectatis oculis cordis,*” (had beheld [them] with the eyes of the heart).⁷⁵

The *Dream* provides an ideal example of Augustine's devotionally productive spectacle in which both the Dreamer and the medieval reader must read the body of Christ correctly. As we saw above, Christian *spectaculum* at its heart centers around the tortured body, whether the body of Christ, the body of martyrs, or the body of the sinner. It is through these images of the body being rent (as we saw in *Vercelli IV*) or ripped apart (in the *Psychomachia*) that these texts produce meaning for their readers and listeners.⁷⁶ Used here within the *Dream*, the *wæfersyne*

⁷³ Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, “Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” 228. See also: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan (New York, 1978), 34.

⁷⁴ Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, “Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” 228.

⁷⁵ Augustine, *Sermo LI, Patrologiae cursus completus Series Latina* 38 (Paris: Jacques-Paul Migne, 1844-64), 51.2 (332-353).

⁷⁶ As Mary Olson suggests, for medieval readers, “the body was more present in writing than it is today, and pictures could have profound intellectual and spiritual content.” The image of the

(spectacle) marks a shift towards the visual ekphrastic crux of the Rood's monologue. This term accordingly introduces the extended description of Christ as he strips down and mounts the Rood in the sight of the crowd—the Cross describes the moment in which Christ was “strang ond stiðmod” (l. 40a) (strong and resolute) as he “Gestah he on gealgan heanne/ modig on manigra gesyhðe” (ll. 40b-41a) (he ascended on the high gallows, brave in the vision of many). The Rood seems to use *wæfersyne* in the negative sense, and it has accordingly been translated to mean “shameful spectacle” because grammatically the enemies make the torture of Christ and the Rood into a public event.⁷⁷ And yet, as we shift to the Dreamer's narration, it is a matter of perspective whether or not we understand the *wæfersyne* as shameful. The Rood's concept of *wæfersyne* contrasts with the notion of Christ's Crucifixion as a victory against sin, which occurs in the poem directly after these lines when Christ is depicted as a Germanic hero purposefully mounting the Cross.⁷⁸ In the *Dream*, the Rood accordingly says of Christ: “Geseah ic þa frean

crucifix therefore wielded a strong protective power over people and objects. The power of this image derived from God but resided in the object because of its formal (metaphoric) or connective (synecdochic) efficacy. The *Dream of the Rood* both recalls the essential role of the Cross in the drama of salvation and celebrates the common *Adoratio crucis* and the Cross as the Tree of Life tropes that are common throughout Anglo-Saxon liturgy and devotion. It's crucial to remember here that Old English verse doesn't lament the crucified body of Christ on the Cross, like we see in the later Middle Ages with the rise of the Man of Sorrow trope. Although the intimate relationship between Christ and the Cross is highlighted in the poem, the focus is ultimately on salvation rather than the immense tragedy of the Crucifixion itself. See further: Mary Olson, “Words into Images: Textualizing the Visual and Visualizing the Textual in Medieval Illustrated Manuscripts,” (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Purdue University, 1997), 62.; Barbara C. Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography and the Art of the Monastic Revival*, *Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 18. See also: Judith Garde, “*The Dream of the Rood*, Crucifixion tree: Tree of Life,” *Old English Poetry in Medieval Christian Perspective* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), 90-93; J.A.W Bennett, “A Vision of the Rood,” *Poetry of the Passion. Studies in twelve centuries of English verse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 1.

⁷⁷ See further: Robert DiNapoli, “Close to the Edge: *The Fortune of Men* and the Limits of Wisdom Literature,” in *Text and Transmission in Medieval Europe*, ed. Chris Bishop (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 140.

⁷⁸ In Colossians 2:15, for example, we get an explicit discussion of how the Crucifixion as a public event exposed the shame of Christ's enemies while cementing his triumph over them:

mancynnes/ efstan elne mycle þæt he me wolde on gestigan” (ll. 33b-34b) (I saw then the savior of mankind draw near with great zeal, as if he wanted to ascend me). The contrast in *wæfersyne* is in turn mirrored in the Dreamer, who is simultaneously horrified that the “feondas genoge” (l. 33a) (strong enemies) would commit such treason, and happy in spirit that Christ sacrificed himself for the salvation of mankind.

For the Dreamer, the Rood’s vision is devotionally productive because it allows him to access and meditate deeply on Christ’s suffering. As we will see in the next sections, visualizing the *wæfersyne* on the stage of the mind is nevertheless first contingent upon turning away from the community and delving into the inner-self. Having visualized the spectacle on the stage of the mind, the Dreamer is then able to fully participate and immerse himself within the event as a witness, thereby mimicking the emotional and affective reactions of those who first witnessed the Crucifixion. The *Dream*’s vivid descriptions in turn incite readers to also visualize and remember the Crucifixion as they move through the *Dream* alongside the Dreamer. The link between the spectacular dream vision and the mind-stage is key here—rather than witnessing the spectacle in real-time, the written dream vision as a devotional genre encourages readers to recall

“delens quod adversum nos erat chirografum decretis quod erat contrarium nobis et ipsum tulit de medio adfigens illud cruci. expolians principatus et potestates traduxit palam triumphans illos in semet ipso” (Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross. And despoiling the principalities and powers, he hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in himself). See further: O. D. Macrae-Gibson, “Christ the Victor-Vanquished in *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 70 (1969): 667–72; Carol Jean Wolf, “Christ as Hero in *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 71 (1970): 202–10; Michael D. Cherniss, “The Cross as Christ’s Weapon: The Influence of Heroic Literary Tradition on *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 2 (1973): 167–186; Kathleen E. Dubs, “Hæleð: Heroism in *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Neophilologus* 59 (1975): 614–15; Bernard Huppé, “The Concept of the Hero in the Early Middle Ages,” in *Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Norman T. Burns and Christopher J. Reagan, eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), 1–26, at 6–8; M. L. Del Mastro, “*The Dream of the Rood* and the Militia Christi: Perspective in Paradox,” *American Benedictine Review* 27 (1976): 171–86; Anne Klinck, “Christ as Soldier and Servant in *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Florilegium* 4 (1982): 109–116.

and “see” the event, with what Alfred calls the *modes eagan* (eyes of the mind), each and every time they read the poem. Before further investigating the *Dream* as a performed inner-spectacle, specifically through the relationship between the Dreamer and the reader as co-protagonists, it is first necessary to examine in greater detail the poem’s shifting movement between interior and exterior devotion—namely, how the poem requires the Dreamer to leave behind the noise of the world and turn inward to ‘see’ the spectacle, before reaching back to the community with his newfound knowledge. It is ultimately performing this cyclical shifting between the inner self and outer community, I argue, that creates a productive devotional practice for medieval readers.

The Dreamer Asleep—Retreating into the Inner-Self:

While the *Dream*’s vivid imagery sets the stage for the Dreamer and the reader to envision the Crucifixion, the staging of the scene occurs within the mind, deep within the inner-consciousness and away from the distractions of earthly life. In the next two sections below, I therefore turn to examine the Dreamer’s journey into the self, and his subsequent re-entry into the corporeal world at the end of the poem. In many senses, my point of departure within this dissertation, via the examination of private dialogue in Augustine’s Latin *Soliloquies* and King Alfred’s Old English translation, has come full circle in this chapter on interior devotion in the *Dream*. The similarities between the *Soliloquies* and the *Dream* are many, but my primary focus is the moment in which the central protagonists acknowledge their earthly communities before retreating into the private space of the mind. As we saw in the *Soliloquies*, the text begins with a turn away from the public sphere, inward into the *ingepanc* (inner-consciousness). In both the Latin and Old English version, the movement from public dialogic spectacle to interior dialogue is key for the attainment of truth. The soliloquy, as Augustine conceived it and Alfred uses it, is a

hybrid form which vacillates between public and private, between an internal monologue and a dramatic dialogue between two characters. This genre of writing first and foremost allows readers to retreat within the mind to unravel particularly difficult or profound moral questions without having to express doubt or confusion in public. The soliloquy, or inner-dialogue, in this way acts as a didactic tool that provides readers with a script or template for devotion and meditation.

In the Latin and OE *Soliloquies*, the text begins suddenly with a strange disembodied voice—when Augustine and Agustinus are meditating one day on God and the soul, an unknown voice enters their minds so that they could not tell if the voice came from within or without their own bodies.⁷⁹ In the *Dream*, we get a similar push and pull between private and public life that is highlighted through Dreamer and the Cross’ respective soliloquies. As a dream vision, the narrative begins in the public or communal realm and quickly delves into the inner consciousness or space of the mind. The poem opens: “Hwæt: ic swefna cyst secgan wylle/ hwæt me gemætte to midre nihte/ syðþan reordberend reste wundedon” (ll. 1-3) (Listen: I wish to speak of the choicest of dreams, what came to me as a dream in the middle of the night, after the voice-bearers remain at rest). Though the Dreamer begins by calling his audience to “Hwæt” (listen), he quickly distances himself from the “reordberend” (literally, speech-bearers) as he retreats into his dream vision.

⁷⁹ In Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, the line is: “ait mihi subito sive ego ipse sive alius quis, extrinsecus sive intrinsecus, nescio; nam hoc ipsum est quod magnopere scire molior” (I.1) (suddenly one—I know not, but eagerly strive to know, whether it were myself or another, within me or without); in Alfred’s translation, the uncertainty of the speaker’s voice is maintained—“Þa answarode me sum ðing, ic nat hwæt, hweðer þe ic sylf þe oðer þing, ne þæt nat, hwæðer hit wæs innan me ðe utan” (1) (Then answered me something, I know now what, whether myself or another thing; nor know I whether it was within or without me). For Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, see: Augustine. *Soliloquiorum Libri Duo; De Immortalitate Animae; De Quantitate Animae*, ed. Wolfgang Hörmann, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera*, CSEL 89 (Vienna, 1986). For Alfred’s version of the *Soliloquies*, see: *King Alfred’s Old English Version of St. Augustine’s Soliloquies*, ed. Henry Lee Hargrove, (New York: Holt, 1902).

Scholars have discussed the kenning “reordberend” many times over, focusing on its etymology and significance as a metaphor.⁸⁰ Many have understood the term as simple poetic compound for ‘people’, but it is worth pausing on the term to further parse out its role within the poem. Mark Swanton, for example, argues that the basic lexeme of the *reord-berend* (speech-bearer) is formed by analogy, (abstract + *berend*) with *feorh-*, *gast-*, and *sawl-berend*.⁸¹ The popularity of this term as we know it is relatively sparse in the Anglo-Saxon period, with just nine recorded uses all occurring within religious poetry.⁸² Within these nine instances, the term is employed in eschatological contexts in poems like *Elene*, *Christ III*, and *Daniel*, as well as more generally in the context of divine visions and dreams.⁸³ More specifically, the term is linked in each of these nine citations to revelatory communication between the divine and mankind—whether the divine connects with mankind by giving them visions, or mankind looks up to praise the divine.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Britt Mize, “The Mental Container and the Cross of Christ: Revelation and Community in *The Dream of the Rood*,” 143-4.

⁸¹ *The Dream of the Rood*, Michael Swanton, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), note to line 3. In this note he cites James Walter Rankin, “A Study of the Kennings in Anglo-Saxon Poetry,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 9 (1910): 49-84, at 66, when he relates *reordberend* with the Latin *lingua* within the Vulgate. Swanton also states that apart from the *sawlberend* of Beowulf line. 1004, no kenning of the -berend group occurs “outside religious verse.”

⁸² The term can be found in the following poems: *Daniel*, *Andreas*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *Elene*, and the *Christ* poems. Andrew Galloway has written on the connection between *Daniel* and *The Dream of the Rood* in regards to the kenning specifically—see further: Andrew Galloway, “Dream-Theory in *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Wanderer*,” 476-477.

⁸³ *Daniel* (l. 123), *Christ I & III* (I: 11. 278, 381; III: 11. 1024, 1368), *Andreas* (l. 419), *Elene* (l. 1282), *The Dream of the Rood* (ll. 3, 89). This information was gathered from: *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, compiled by Antonette diPaolo Healey with John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project 2009).

⁸⁴ This latter example occurs twice in *Christ I* at line 278 in the *Advent Lyric* based on the antiphon *O mundi Domina*, in which the Virgin is praised as a transcendent divine figure: “hu þec mid ryhte ealle reordberend/ hatað ond secgað” (how all speech-bearers rightly name you and say...). The second is at line 381 in a lyric which praises the Trinity: “mid þa ryhte sculon reordberende/ earme eorðware ealle magene/ hergan healice” (that speech-bearers, who are wretched earth-dwellers, must by right praise highly with all their power). The receivers of the

For the *Dreamer*, the *reordberend* (speech-bearers) must be left behind so that he may experience the dream at all. Indeed, as Galloway has aptly observed, “it is only after these common speakers have been quieted that the dreamer can ‘hear’ the Rood ‘speak these words’ (26-27), relaying the account of the Crucifixion and the Rood’s instructions to the dreamer in turn to ‘tell this vision to all men’.”⁸⁵ Mark Swanton has suggested that this noise is pitched as an unfavorable attribute in the *Dream*, so that *reordberend* is used “with fine negative effect, at once emphatic both of the silence that surrounds the visionary and of the carelessness of those that sleep, ignoring the message of Salvation.”⁸⁶ I would argue, however, that the poet does not attach a negative connotation to this term. If the compound *reordberend* retains the same meaning in the *Dream* as it does elsewhere in the OE corpus—namely, the explicit communication between man and the divine through the gift of visions—it is possible that the Dreamer must undergo the vision alone (*ana*) in order to receive the wisdom and understanding that he eventually acquires. It is only through retreating into the self away from the world that he can hope to connect with the divine. Although the Dreamer *must* retreat from the noise of daily life and into the inner mind for the dream to occur, he is at the end of the day still very much a part of his community, a speech-bearer like the rest of mankind. This is made apparent at the end of the poem when he eventually awakens and rejoins the world. The use of the term within the poem serves to underscore mankind’s vocality, and to highlight the importance of speech and proclamation within the Christian community.

As we will see below, medieval devotion is made up of several interconnected components that are each necessary for a successful life on earth; in order to move within the

communication here are celestial beings, instead of humans as we see in texts like *Daniel* and *The Dream of the Rood*.

⁸⁵ Andrew Galloway, “Dream Theory in *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Wanderer*,” 476.

⁸⁶ Mark Swanton, *The Dream of the Rood*, 99.

community to spread wisdom and the Word of God, individuals must first delve into the inner space of the mind to understand the soul. Medieval authors would have had access to this concept in part from Augustine's *De Genesi ad Litteram* and *De Magistro*, in which he discusses in detail the process of turning inward to engage in meditation. In *De Magistro*, Augustine argues that we learn nothing from signs in the world, and it is only through Christ, the "inner teacher," that we are able to understand Truth. He accordingly argues that individual devotees are "docetur enim non verbis meis, sed ipsis rebus deo intus pandente manifestis" (XII.40) (taught not by my words, but by the things themselves made manifest within when God discloses them).⁸⁷ To look upon Truth and understand it, individuals must always turn to the inner-self to where Christ resides. One of the primary means of communication between the divine and mankind, in which God revealed knowledge to mankind, was through the spectacle of visions and dreams. The connection between dreams, sleep, and contemplative meditation in medieval and patristic sources is long-ranging and complex. For Augustine, epiphanies and dreams share in the same category as visionary events in which devotees witness devotional *spectacula*.⁸⁸ He goes on to

⁸⁷ Augustine, *De Magistro*, CSEL 77, G. Weigel, ed. (1961), XII.40.

⁸⁸ Here Augustine expounds upon the differences in vision: "Quod autem non imaginaliter, sed proprie videtur, et non per corpus videtur, hoc ea visione videtur, quae omnes caeteras superat... Ecce in hoc uno praecepto cum legitur: Diliges proximum tuum tamquam teipsum, tria genera visionum occurrunt: unum per oculos, quibus ipsae litterae videntur; alterum per spiritum hominis quo proximus et absens cogitatur; tertium per contuitum mentis, quo ipsa dilectio intellecta conspicitur. In his tribus generibus, illud primum manifestum est omnibus: in hoc enim videtur coelum et terra, et omnia quae in eis conspicua sunt oculis nostris. Nec illud alterum, quo absentia corporalia cogitantur, insinuare difficile est: ipsum quippe coelum et terram, et ea quae in eis videre possumus, etiam in tenebris constituti cogitamus ... Tertium vero illud quo dilectio intellecta conspicitur, eas res continet, quae non habent imagines sui similes, quae non sunt quod ipsae. Nam homo vel arbor vel sol, et quaecumque alia corpora, sive coelestia sive terrestria, et praesentia videntur in suis formis, et absentia cogitantur in imaginibus animo impressis; et faciunt duo genera visorum, unum per corporis sensus, alterum per spiritum, quo illae imagines continentur. Dilectio autem numquid aliter videtur praesens in specie qua est, et aliter absens in aliqua imagine sui simili? Non utique" (To see an object not in an image but in itself, yet not through the body, is to see with a vision surpassing all other visions...When we read this one commandment, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, we experience three kinds of vision:

lay out the forms of visions in *De Genesi* that are available to mankind—the first two (corporeal and spiritual) allow us to think about bodies on earth and in heaven whether they are present or not. The third type of vision is intellectual, and requires mankind to “cum ablatis oculis ab eo, quod pero oculos videbamus, imaginem eius in animo invenerimus” (XII.11.22) (remove our eyes from the object that we are gazing at through the eyes and find an image of it within our soul); thus, within a divinely gifted dream, the visionary sees with the eyes of the mind rather than the eyes of the body, allowing him or her to see the true images of things as they are.”⁸⁹

Anglo-Saxons would have also had access to dream theory from a range of other authors from Gregory the Great to Aldhelm.⁹⁰ Galloway has argued that Gregory’s hierarchy of dreams

one through the eyes, by which we see the letters; a second through the spirit, by which we think of our neighbor even when he is absent; and a third through an intuition of the mind, by which we see and understand love itself. Of these three kinds of vision the first is clear to everyone: through it we see heaven and earth and in them everything that meets the eye. The second, by which we think of corporeal things that are absent, is not difficult to explain; for we think of heaven and earth and the visible things in them even when we are in the dark...The third kind of vision, by which we see and understand love, embraces those objects which have no images resembling them which are not identical with them. A man, a tree, the sun, or any other bodies in heaven or on earth are seen in their own proper form when present, and are thought of, when absent, in images impressed upon the soul...but in the case of love, is it seen in one manner when present, in the form in which it exists, and in another manner when absent, in an image resembling it? Certainly not). Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram: The Literal Meaning of Genesis, Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol. 2, ed. John Hammond Taylor (New York: The Newman Press, 1982), 12.6.15. For the Latin, see: Augustine, *La Genèse au sens littéral en douze livres*, eds. P. Agaësse and A. Solignac (BA: *Oeuvres de s. Augustin*, 48-49: Bruges-Paris, 1972).

⁸⁹ Augustine, *De Genesi ad Literam*, 12.11.22.

⁹⁰ For an analysis on the knowledge of dream-theory in Anglo-Saxon England, see further: Galloway, “Dream-Theory in *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Wanderer*,” 480-481; Steven Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); John Fleming, “*The Dream of the Rood* and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism,” *Traditio* 22 (1966): 43-72; Malcolm Godden, “Were It Not That I Had Bad Dreams: Gregory the Great and the Anglo-Saxons on the Dangers of Dreaming,” in *Rome and the North: The Earl Reception of Gregory the Great in Germanic Europe*, eds. Rolf Bremmer, Kees Dekker and David Johnson (Paris: Peeters, 2001), 93-113; Constance B. Hieatt, “Dream Frame and Verbal Echo in *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 72 (1971): 251-263; Paul Szarmach, “Ælfric, the Prose Vision, and *The Dream of the Rood*,” in *Studies in Honour of René Derolez*, ed. A.M. Simon-Vandenbergen (Ghent: Seminarie voor Engelse en Oud-Germaanse Taalkunde, R.U.G., 1987), 592-602. Antonia Harbus, “Nebuchadnezzar’s Dreams in the Old English *Daniel*,”

is more common within the Middle Ages than scholars have noted in the past; the *Moralia in Job* and *Dialogues* were particularly influential for how early medieval readers thought about the relationship between visions and meditation.⁹¹ Mize, engaging with Galloway's analysis of Gregory's dream theory and its relationship to the *Dream*, aptly draws our attention to a passage in the *Moralia in Job* about retreating from the distractions of the waking world. The Dreamer, Mize argues, retreats into what Gregory calls the *secretarium mentis* (secret place of the mind) which allows the devotee to productively meditate on the divine.⁹² The vision in turn becomes a solitary meditative experience in which the Dreamer's understanding is directly related to his solitude as the sole listener and witness of the Rood's narrative. The message of the dream is therefore only made available to the Dreamer, unless he decides to share his knowledge with his community as the Rood demands. Just as Augustine's inner drama suddenly emerges fully formed within his mind, so too are dreams gifted to recipients within the wider scope of OE

English Studies 75 (1994): 489-508; Antonia Harbus, "Dream and Symbol in *The Dream of the Rood*," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 40 (1996): 1-15. Marrero Mele, "The Anglo-Saxon Dreams: The Semantic Space of Swefnian and Mætan," *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 43 (2001): 193-207.

⁹¹ Galloway, "Dream-Theory in *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Wanderer*," 480-481. Asser, for example, offers proof of Gregory's popularity in his *Life of King Alfred*. Two passages in particular have direct parallels with Gregory's *Dialogues* and *Moralia in Job*. For an examination of this connection, see further: Michael Lapidge, "Asser's Reading," in *Alfred the Great*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 35. See also: "Were It Not That I Have Had Bad Dreams: Gregory and the Anglo-Saxons on Dreaming," 93-113.

⁹² Britt Mize, "The Mental Container and the Cross of Christ," 142-143. From Gregory's *Moralia* on the differences between waking and sleeping: "Whoever is bent to do the things which are of the world, is, as it were, awake, but he, that seeking inward rest eschews the riot of this world, sleeps as it were... For, in truth, in proportion as the holy mind withholds itself from the turmoil of temporal desire, the more thoroughly it attains to know the things of the interior, and is the more quick and awake to inward concerns, the more it withdraws itself out of sight from external disquietude. And this is well represented by Jacob sleeping on his journey. He put a stone to his head and slept. He beheld a ladder from the earth fixed in heaven, the Lord resting upon the ladder, Angels also ascending and descending. For to 'sleep on a journey' is, in the passage of this present life, to rest from the love of things temporal." Gregory, *Morals on the Book of Job*, 3 vols. (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1844), Book V.54.282.

poetry. As Mize goes on to argue, characters in OE poetry “do not ‘dream’ in the way implied by Modern English grammatical construction, which situates the dreamer as the agent of the event. Instead, dreams come to them.”⁹³

This concept is essential for understanding the opening of the *Dream*. Humans cannot reach the divine without being gifted it—like grace and salvation itself, dreams are a gift from God in their function to transform the recipient and give him or her true wisdom. The source of the dream in patristic and medieval writings is essential. For Anglo-Saxon readers, Aelfric discusses the importance of a dream’s source in his account of Saint Swithun: “sume swefna syndon soðlice of gode swa swa we on bocum raedað and sume beoð of deofle to sumum swicdome hu he ða sawle for-pære” (Some dreams are truly from God, just as we read in books, and some are from the devil for some deception, how he may destroy the soul).⁹⁴ In the *Dream*, the Dreamer accordingly emphasizes the divine nature of his vision from the very first line, stressing that it was *swefna cyst* (the best of dreams) rather than a dream sent by a more nefarious source.

Readers are thus meant to understand the Dreamer’s vision as a gift from the very beginning of the poem, for the dream comes from somewhere or someone outside of himself. Accordingly, the Dreamer asks readers to listen to this *swefna cyst* that “gemætte to midre niht” (l. 2) (occurred in a dream in the middle of the night). The verb *gemættan* here grammatically situates the dreamer as the passive receiver of the vision that comes to him.⁹⁵ Mize pushes this

⁹³ Britt Mize, “The Mental Container and the Cross of Christ,” 141.

⁹⁴ Ælfric, *Life of Saint Swithun (Lives of Saints, XXI)*, ed. and trans. Michael Lapidge, *The Cult of St. Swithun, Winchester Studies IV.2* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 590-609. For another edition, see: Ælfric, *Lives of Saints*, ed. and trans. Walter W. Skeat, *EETS* (London, 1881-1900); reprint in 2 Volumes (London: 1966).

⁹⁵ As Mize notes, another OE verb for “to dream,” *swefnian*, echoes this passivity—it is only used once in Old English poetry to describe a terrible dream that was given to the recipient For an examination of these verbs and an excellent study of the passivity topos in Old English dream

idea one step further, however, by arguing that the dreamer is passive as a character throughout the whole poem, both in being gifted his dream and in his position within the vision—the vision is thus “not itself a dramatic scene or a directly interactive one, although the speaking cross of the dream will *describe* a dramatic and interactive scene in recounting its experience of the crucifixion...” and the Dreamer is merely an observer.⁹⁶ While it is undeniable that the Dreamer is initially given the dream sequence from an outside source, he is far from a passive recipient within the rest of the sequence. Mize suggests that the Rood “delivers a monologue that invites no answer except later waking action.”⁹⁷ And yet, like the complex interplay between the damned soul’s dramatic monologue and the reader’s reaction in *Vercelli IV*, the Rood asks both the Dreamer and the reader to ‘answer’ his dramatic soliloquy through his active interpretation and his affective responses (his weeping, terror, and joy).

For both Augustine and Gregory, too, engaging in a vision is an active process that corresponds directly with spiritual growth. The soul of the devotee accordingly “wanders through various images seen by it” to learn the Truth, just as a scholar would wander through the images within a biblical commentary or allegory.⁹⁸ In order to see the true images of things,

theory, see further: Britt Mize, “The Mental Container and the Cross of Christ,” 141-142. The use of *swefnian* in OE poetry occurs in *Daniel*, when Nebuchadnezzar has a dream in the middle of the night and wakes up afraid, though he cannot remember the vision. He asks his sorcerers to interpret the dream, but they are unable to without knowing the dream’s content. “Ða him unbliðe andswaredon deofolwitgan (næs him dom gearu to asecganne swefen cyninge). Hu magon we swa dygle, drihten, ahicgan on sefan þinne, hu ðe swefnede, oððe wyrda gesceaft wisdom bude, gif þu his ærest ne meaht or areccan?” (ll. 127-133) (Then answered his devil’s prophets unhappily (for judgment was not given to them to interpret the king’s dream): How may we know such hidden things about your dream, how you dreamt or what the shape of fate has decreed, if you do not first the beginning of your dream?).

⁹⁶ Britt Mize, “The Mental Container and the Cross of Christ,” 142.

⁹⁷ Britt Mize, “The Mental Container and the Cross of Christ,” 142.

⁹⁸ Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, 10.25.42. For more on Augustine’s concept of dreams and the soul, see: Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 74-105. Victor Turner suggests that dream visions, whether autobiographical or not, could be a form of internal pilgrimage. For Turner, the

visionaries must also read and interpret the dream correctly. Later in the *Moralia in Job*, Gregory examines the interactivity of dreaming by explicitly distinguishing between those who interpret what they see and those who do not. He references Jacob who, by sleeping, rested from the noise of the corporeal world by withdrawing into the inner-mind: “And it is very deserving of observation, that...he who sees the Angels in his sleep, surely because that same person by resting from external works penetrates internal truths, who with mind intent, which is the governing Principle of man, looks to the imitating of his Redeemer.”⁹⁹ In other words, devotees who turn inward and actively observe, interpret, and apply what they see are engaging in the purest form of devotion.

In the *Dream*, while the vision comes in the middle of the night while the Dreamer is at rest, his soul is nevertheless awake and ready to receive God’s wisdom. That the Dreamer should play an active role in his dream is thus ultimately a question of active and passive reading. I would argue that his participation, through his observation, fear, joy, and sorrow, instead signals the true interactivity of the vision itself. During the time that the Dreamer “þær licgende lange hwile” (l. 24) (lay there a long while) as the dream washes over him, he is actively beholding and reading the scene before him. The drama of the Rood’s narrative, with its poignant imagery and impassioned soliloquy, is affective in that it pushes the Dreamer to linger in the space of his *ingebance* (inner-consciousness) as he uses the vision to meditate on Christ and the Cross.

link between dream visions and pilgrimages in late medieval dream-visions hinges on the way in which both involve breaking from the events of daily life to embark on a journey in order to find and know God. See further: Victor Turner and Edith Turner, “Locality and Universality in Medieval Pilgrimages,” in *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 172-179.

⁹⁹ Gregory, *Morals on the Book of Job*, Book V.55.283.

The Dreamer Revived—Community in *The Dream of the Rood*:

The moment the Dreamer awakens from his sleep is a crux or turning point in which the poem slides back into the present. Edward Irving, J. Fleming, and Robert Burlin have analyzed this moment as indicating the Dreamer's newfound commitment to Christ and the contemplative life.¹⁰⁰ The Dreamer becomes transformed from what he experiences within the vision, and wakes up inflamed with passion for the "sigebeam" (victory-tree) after he recognizes that praying to the Rood is his path to salvation. The Rood initiates the eventual shift from past vision to present reality when, after spending 69 lines detailing the Crucifixion event, he changes from past tense to present tense. In line 95, he urges the Dreamer to act in the here and now: "nu ic þe hate hæleð min se leofa/ þæt þu þas gesyhðe secge mannum" (l. 95-96) (now I urge you, my beloved, that you tell men about this vision). The Rood then provides a brief account of salvation history before switching to the future tense when he imagines Judgment Day.

The Rood's initial move from past to present prefaces the Dreamer's own movement from vision to reality as he moves into the final section of the poem. The specific moment the Dreamer awakens is traditionally located within the following lines: "Gebæd ic me þa to þan beame bliðe mode/ elne mycle þær ic ana wæs/ mæte werede" (ll. 122-124) (I prayed to the tree with a happy spirit then/ with great zeal, there where I was alone with a small company). As we saw earlier, Mize suggests that the Dreamer is entirely passive within the vision, and he is only required to act sometime in the future after he awakens.¹⁰¹ I argue, however, that in rethinking the temporality of this moment when the Dreamer moves from his vision to the world, we can

¹⁰⁰ See further: Galloway, "Dream-Theory in *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Wanderer*," 478. Edward B. Irving, "Crucifixion Witnessed, or Dramatic Interaction in *The Dream of the Rood*," 265-266. J. Fleming, "*The Dream of the Rood* and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism," *Traditio*, Vol. 22 (1966): 60. See also: Robert Burlin, "The Ruthwell Cross, *The Dream of the Rood*, and the Vita Contemplativa," *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (1968): 32-33.

¹⁰¹ Britt Mize, "The Mental Container and the Cross of Christ," 142.

also rethink his role as passive observer. It has always been assumed that these lines describing the act of praying signal the Dreamer's departure from the vision; and yet, because this sentence remains in the past tense, which the poet uses to demarcate the vision from the opening and closing sections, it makes sense to understand the Dreamer's act of praying as occurring still within the dream. Reading this shift in temporality can also shed light on the statement "ic ana wæs mæte werede" (I was alone with a small troupe), which has remained a puzzling phrase for scholars because it is uncertain who or what could make up the Dreamer's *werod* (troop) within the solitary vision. Andy Orchard and Emily Thornbury rightly suggest, I think, that the *werod* refers to the Rood and Christ as co-inhabitants of the dream world.¹⁰² Orchard draws this conclusion after noting the specific parallelism between the Dreamer and Christ—just as Christ earlier "reste...ðær mæte weorode" (l. 69b) (rested there with a small company), referring to the three crosses from the Crucifixion, so too does the Dreamer pray within the company of the Rood and Christ. And so, if he is indeed praying within the vision itself, he in turn provides an immediate answer to the Rood's speech through his keen devotion. The Dreamer listens to the Rood's speech in rapt attention, and responds by internalizing the vision and incorporating the experience into his devotional program.

It is striking, as Galloway has noted, how the poem both emphasizes the act of waking up and lingers within the gray areas between vision and consciousness.¹⁰³ The moment of

¹⁰² Emily Thornbury, "The Poet in the Community," in *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 133-134.

¹⁰³ Galloway argues compellingly that this demonstrates how the Dreamer both works through and applies Gregory's definition of "waking" and "sleeping": "Quisquis ea quae mundi sunt agere appetit quasi vigilat; quisquis vero internam quietem quaerens, huius mundi strepitum fugit, velum obdormiscit" (i. 255) (Each man desiring to achieve those things which pertain to the world is as if awake; but each man seeking inner quiet, fleeing the tumult of this world, is as if asleep) (translation his). Cf. Galloway, "Dream-Theory in *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Wanderer*," 475-478.

awakening is drawn out over several lines, functioning in turn to preface the poem's homiletic conclusion. After the Dreamer prays to the Rood, he then steps back to reflect on the state of his soul, stating, "wæs modsefa/ afysed on forðeweg feala ealra gebad/ langunghwila" (ll. 124b-126a) (My inner spirit longed for the forth-way (future journey); I endured many times of longing). The temporality of these lines is difficult to pin down; while they occur in past tense, which grammatically links them with the Rood's vision, they are also connected with the final section of the poem in which the Dreamer reflects on his own experience. These lines seem to be situated in limbo, so to speak, halfway between the dream and the Dreamer's reality. The first two half-lines, "wæs modsefa/ afysed on forðeweg," can be understood as a continuation of the previous line, so that even as the Dreamer rests "bliðe mode" (with a happy spirit) in his vision and prays "elne mycle" (with great zeal), he realizes that he must eventually return to the world to await final judgment. This spiritual longing, signaled by the verb *afysan*, which is typically used in OE poetry to indicate the specific eagerness for the *forðeweg* (future journey or way), is common in devotional texts.¹⁰⁴ After experiencing the Rood's vision, the Dreamer now rightly views the waking world as a mere shadow of what he will experience when he is reunited with

¹⁰⁴ *Afysan* is used to signal this same spiritual longing in *Guthlac B* and *The Phoenix*. In *Guthlac B* in particular, we see similar phrasing and language surrounding the *afysan* term as well—the term is paired with *bliðe* and *forðsið*. After describing how Guthlac was able to heal each and every visitor who came to him in pain, the narrator relates the holy man's eventual sickness and decline. In line 938, he is said to "hreþer innan born/ afysed on forðsið. Him færinga/ adl in gewod. He on elne swa þeah ungebyged bad/ beorhta gehata bliþe in burgum" (ll. 438b-942a) (His breast burnt within, longing for the future journey. Suddenly a sickness diminished him. Yet he endured it undismayed with much courage for the splendid things promised, happy in the dwellings). In *The Phoenix*, "þæt sindon þa word swa us gewritu secgað/ hleoþor haligra þe him to heofonum bið/ to þam mildan gode mod afysed/ in dreama dream þær hi dryhtne to giefen worda ond weorca wynsumne stenc/ in þa mæran gesceaft meotode bringað/ in þæt leohte lif" (ll. 655-661) (such are the words then, as writings tell us, and the songs of the holy ones whose spirits long to be gone to heaven to that merciful God, the joy of joys, where as a gift to the lord in that glorious creation, they bring the pleasant aroma of words and works into that bright life). Bernard Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, Vol. 1 (Exeter, 1994), 111-159; N.F. Blake, *The Phoenix* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964).

Christ in heaven.¹⁰⁵ The subsequent two half-lines “ealra gebad/ langunghwila” continue to emphasize his yearning for the next world with the hapax legomenon *langunghwila*, which translates to “times of longing.”¹⁰⁶ In the sequence of awakening, these lines seem to shift the poem’s temporality farther from the dream vision proper, as if the Dreamer is now looking back on this moment of longing in his reflections. It therefore seems as if the first two half-lines occur within the dream vision as the Dreamer remembers his ties to the world, and the final two half-lines occur after he has woken up and experienced the *langunghwila*.

This small passage ultimately serves as a bridge between the vision and the poem’s final section in which the Dreamer leaves behind sorrow and turns to *hyht* (feeling or state of hope). Perhaps we can think of these lines as the Dreamer cracking his eyes open after experiencing the vivid detail of the Rood’s narration. He is overcome with that familiar sense of loss when a particularly good dream comes to an end; though the experience is over, he recognizes that the vision was a divine gift to point him towards a productive devotional path. His mind is simultaneously pulled backwards into the past through his recollection of the divine vision, and forward into the present as he both laments the need to remain on earth and follows the Cross’ orders to relate his dream to mankind.¹⁰⁷

The question remains for the Dreamer and for medieval readers: what is the best way to incorporate divine dreams into everyday life? And what is the right balance between resting

¹⁰⁵ As Augustine famously says in the opening of the *Confessions*, “inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te” (I.1) (our heart cannot be quieted till it may find repose in you). Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. G.P. Goold, trans. William Watts, *Loeb Classical Library* 26 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Bosworth, Joseph, “Lagunghwila,” *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth*. Thomas Northcote Toller, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 575.

¹⁰⁷ To dwell on the moment the Dreamer awakens also forces the reader to dwell on how he or she can bring the knowledge and wisdom they receive deep within contemplation into the outer world when they “wake up.”

within the inner-self and moving within the community to spread wisdom and knowledge? The poet, I argue, navigates both of these questions within the poem's conclusion, which can be divided into two sections—lines 126-146, in which the Dreamer discusses his personal reaction to the vision, and lines 147-156, in which he broadens the scope of his address to include the entire community of Christian devotees. Just as the poem explicitly moves between character perspectives, these final lines bring into sharp relief the poem's shift between the inner and outer world, the public and private. In lines 126b-131a, he leaves behind his *langunghwila* (times of longing) and turns fully to his present reality: “is me nu lifes hyht þæt ic þone sigebeam secan mote ana oftor þonne ealle men/ well weorþian. Me is willa to ðam/ mycel on mode ond mind mundbyrd is/ geriht to þære rode” (ll. 126b-129a) (it is now my life's hope that I might seek the tree of victory alone more often than all men, to worship it well. My desire for that is great in my mind and my protection is directed to the cross).¹⁰⁸ Here, the Dreamer takes what he has learned in the vision and incorporates it into his daily life—from the dream, he has learned that retreating from the *reordberend* (speech-bearers) into the self is more devotionally productive than remaining awake within the community.

The repetition of the term *ana* (alone) from the previous lines is foregrounded here, in which the Dreamer vows to continually seek the Rood “ana oftor þonne ealle men” (alone more often than all men). While scholars have given his first use of *ana* ample attention, his second use of the term is less frequently discussed. Here, he states that it is his *lyfes hyht* (life's hope) to seek out the Rood alone; *ana* in this line most likely refers to the Dreamer's isolation within the dream vision, and as we saw above in Augustine's concept of inner Truth, retreating from the noise of daily life is the only way to become enlightened. What is particularly striking about this

¹⁰⁸ The repetition of words like *secan* (ll. 104, 127), *fus* (ll. 21, 57), and *elne mycle* (ll. 35, 123) highlight both the Rood's and the Dreamer's participation in the Crucifixion. They are both eager to witness, seek, and reflect on this event.

half-line, however, is that the Dreamer seems to set himself further apart from the community at the very point he transitions to exhortation and awakens into the world from his dream. His continued focus on the inner-self, even as the poem shifts outward to the community, functions to highlight yet again the essentiality of this inward devotional turn. While the community represents an important part of everyday life for medieval devotees, it is only through this frequent (*oft*) retreat into the inner space of the mind to meditate on the *sigebeam* (victory tree) that they can obtain the Rood's *mundbyrd* (protection or patronage).¹⁰⁹

Consequently, although the Dreamer ends the poem with a general statement of Christ's sacrifice and glory, switching to first person plural with the statement "he us onlasyde ond us lif forgeaf" (l. 147) (he released us and gave us life), he spends the majority of the conclusion discussing his eventual attainment of heavenly bliss:

freonda on foldan	Nah ic ricre feala
gewiton of worulde dreamum	ac hie forð heonon
lifaþ nu on heofenum	sohton him wuldres cyning
wuniaþ on wuldre	mid heahfædere
daga gehwylce	ond ic wene me
þe ic her on eorðan	hwænne me dryhtenes rod
on þysson lænan	ær sceawode
one me þonne gebringe	life gefetige
dream on heofonum	þær is blis mycel
geseted to symle	þær is dryhtnes folc
ond me þonne asette	þær is singal blis
wunian on wuldre	þær ic syþþan mot
dreames brucan.	well mid þam halgum
	(ll. 131b-144a).

¹⁰⁹ The word *myndbyrd* (l. 130b, "allegiance, protection") also means "legal patronage of a superior to an inferior in return for service"; Swanton understands this term to have originated in legal usage, which succinctly describes the relationship between Christ, the Crucifixion, and the Christian devotee. In 9 of the 15 occurrences in other Old English poetry, *mundbyrd* is used as an epithet of God or also a divine attribute of God. The Dreamer and the Rood use earthly hierarchies and feudal comparisons to describe the relationship between themselves and God. This is similar to the way in which Alfred translates Augustine's *Soliloquies* using extended metaphors that would be recognizable to laymen. *Mundbyrd*, with its connection to patronage from a lord, would be a useful analogy for lay audiences to explain how praying to the Rood will help earn salvation.

(I do not have many rich friends on earth, but they have gone forth from here, departed from the joy of the world and sought the King of Glory; they live now in heaven with the High Father, they dwell in glory, and I myself hope each day for when the lord's cross, which I saw before here on earth, will fetch me from this loaned life and bring me then to where there is great bliss, joy in heaven, there where the lord's folk are set at feast, there is everlasting bliss, and then will set me where I might after dwell in glory and well partake of joy with the holy saints).

Echoing the previous comparisons between earth and heaven within the poem, the Dreamer again highlights the dichotomy between our world and the afterworld.¹¹⁰ Though he does not have many “freonda on foldan” (friends on earth), he hopes to join the “dryhtnes folc” (the lord's folk) in Heaven where they all together share in the joy of Christ's company. The repetition of “þær is” (there is) in four of the b-lines further highlights this contrast between this world and the next—in *this* world he lacks friends and spends long periods of time in *langung* (longing), whereas *þær* in Heaven he would dwell in “singal blis” (everlasting bliss) in the company of saints. Galloway notes that this dichotomy again reaches back to Gregory's distinction between waking and sleeping; in essence, those who are spiritually awake are asleep on earth, and those who are awake on earth are spiritually asleep. The Dreamer wakes up from his vision “to an assertion of the social plenitudes of the celestial realm that is waiting for those entering the silence of sleep and the more complete silence of death.”¹¹¹ The ideal community that he is imagining in these lines is thus celestial instead of earthly.

Scholars have often argued that the *Dream* ends with a complete shift back to the community as the vision fades from view. And yet, at the end of the poem, readers are left with a

¹¹⁰ For an excellent analysis of the repetition and patterning in the *Dream*, see further: Orchard, “*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross References,” 234-237. Orchard observes in passing that the poem alternates the phrases *on heofonum* and *on eorðan* four times (all in a-lines) in the span of ten lines (134a, 137a, 140a, 145a), functioning to increase the comparison between this life and the next even further.

¹¹¹ Galloway, “Dream-Theory in *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Wanderer*,” 479.

seeming paradox—while the Rood directs the Dreamer to go forth and preach his wisdom to mankind, the Dreamer continues to focus on attaining salvation through individual interior devotion. In examining the poem’s conclusion, it is essential that we linger on this complex relationship between interior and exterior devotion, just as the Dreamer lingers in the vision and draws out the moment of awakening. This poem demonstrates that engaging with the celestial and the earthly communities requires individuals to turn inward and to find their enlightenment through Christ as inner Teacher. It is only through continually retreating into the space of the mind, away from the noise of daily life, that the Dreamer can visualize and experience the Crucifixion. In this way, his focus on remaining *ana* (along) at the end of the poem, even as he rejoins the world, is ideal for devotional practice.

While the Dreamer doesn’t spend quite as much time preaching to his earthly community as has been previously suggested, he nevertheless leaves behind a productive text for his Christian audience—a template that readers can incorporate into their own devotional lives as they themselves strive to worship and imitate the Rood. The poem achieves this universality in three ways: through the prevalent use of first person within the Dreamer and the Rood’s narration; through the explicit connection between the Dreamer and the Rood as characters to be imitated; and through the ample visual imagery, which as we saw above, invites the reader to visualize and imagine the event occurring within the mind. The shifting perspectives within the *Dream* create a striking blend of narrative voices. The majority of the poem is voiced in first person, so that *ic* is used 43 times and *me* 27 times within 156 lines, creating an intimate tone and underscoring the solitary nature of the dream.¹¹² As Emily Thornbury has argued, first person narration “is not a simple mirror of homiletic style: in most cases it is part of a

¹¹² The majority of the *me* occurrences are reflexive. Emily Thornbury counts only 40 uses of *ic* and *me* within the poem. See further: Emily Thornbury, “The Poet in the Community,” 105.

multilayered interaction between the poetic voice and implied audience.”¹¹³ She goes on to suggest that it is effective in poetry because it develops a commonality between the speaker and the audience—“shared knowledge; shared identity; shared experience past and future.”¹¹⁴ The heavy use of *ic* in the *Dream* likewise serves to connect the reader with the Dreamer’s narration—readers are able to “step into” his role by imagining themselves as the narrative’s *ic*-speaker who, with a divine vision thrust upon him, works through his confusion and terror to eventually come away with understanding and hope. This act of substitution works particularly well in the *Dream* because readers are given no context or details about the Dreamer—the poem begins simply with the declaration to *Hwæt* before readers are thrust into the vision framework.¹¹⁵ Like the dynamic visual imagery in the beginning of this chapter, the continual use of first person ultimately draws the reader into the narrative, and shapes his or her reactions to the poem’s spectacle.¹¹⁶

If the narrative voice indeed directs readers to enter the vision, the conversation between the Dreamer and the Rood provides readers with the script to recreate the event within the inner-mind. Judith Garde has argued that “although the intimate relationship that exists between the Rood and Christ is fully developed in the poem, there is little to be gained by associating the Rood and the Dreamer.” Scholars like Andy Orchard and Christina Heckman have nevertheless

¹¹³ Emily Thornbury, “The Poet in the Community,” 105.

¹¹⁴ Emily Thornbury, “The Poet in the Community,” 105.

¹¹⁵ In comparison, the Dreamer only uses the term *us* twice in line 147 when he briefly reaches out to the wider community and states, “He us onlȳsde ond us lif forgeaf” (he redeemed us and gave us life). The Dreamer also doesn’t use the term *we* within the poem. The Rood uses *we* once in line 70 when he is buried with the other crosses after the Crucifixion.

¹¹⁶ This effect in the *Dream* is similar to the first-person narration in Alfred’s *Soliloquies* in Chapter One and in *Vercelli Homily IV* in Chapter Three. The *ic*-speaker becomes a universal character, empty of identifying features, that can be taken up by each reader and molded to his or her own context and circumstances.

shown that connecting the two characters yields rich results.¹¹⁷ Orchard describes in detail how the poem identifies the Dreamer with the Rood using the repetition of a few key phrases, some of which I will outline here. In line 20b, for example, the Dreamer states “Eall ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed” (I was all vexed with sorrows) after observing the bleeding Rood; in line 58b, “sare ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed” (I was sorely afflicted with sorrows), the Rood echoes the Dreamer’s previous line after he sees the Crucifixion first hand. Similarly, just before the Rood begins his narration, the Dreamer states that he “þær licgende lange hwile” (l. 24) (was lying there a long while); these lines are again mirrored in the Rood’s narration in line 70 when he is cut down and buried with the other crosses after the Crucifixion, “Hwæðere we greotende gode hwile” (Yet we were weeping there a good while).

Each of the verbal parallels highlight the subtle interconnection between the Rood and the Dreamer as co-protagonists. Both characters mediate the Crucifixion for readers, and through their performed sorrow and hope, they script the process of reading the event itself. Christina Heckmann has argued that the Dreamer turns the sorrow and guilt of Christ’s death inward into himself, and thus “depends on the Rood’s wisdom and Christ’s forgiveness for his hopeful transformation at the poem’s end.”¹¹⁸ The Dreamer accordingly moves from being “synnum fah” (l. 13b) (stained with sins) and “mid sorgum gedrefed” (l. 20b) (vexed with sorrows) to having a “bliðe mode” (122b) (happy spirit) and enjoying friendship with Christ.¹¹⁹ For the Dreamer, the Cross provides a perfect affective model as one who has physically experienced torture alongside Christ. No one can effectively experience Christ’s Crucifixion as the Rood did; and yet, having experienced the dream-vision and being affected by his message, the Dreamer as a *reordberend*

¹¹⁷ Orchard, *The Dream of the Rood*—Cross References,” 231-2. Christina Heckman, “*Imitatio* in Early Medieval Spirituality,” 141-142.

¹¹⁸ Christina Heckman, “*Imitatio* in Early Medieval Spirituality,” 142.

¹¹⁹ Christina Heckman, “*Imitatio* in Early Medieval Spirituality,” 142.

himself both functions as a model for the reader and demonstrates how praying to the Rood produces successful spiritual results.

Conclusion:

With its sharp focus on the body as spectacle, the turning inward into the mind, and the call for continued meditation on Christ and the Rood that we've seen above, the *Dream* can be read as a forerunner to affective piety that developed later between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries.¹²⁰ The poem is ultimately affective because it uses sight and visibility to move and influence its audience—the Rood leads the Dreamer to an understanding of the soul and God, not by simple dialogue but by explicitly asking him to perform terror, compassion, and subsequent joy that his graphic narrative produces. The Rood then accordingly proclaims, “ic hælan mæg/ æghwylcne anra þara þe him bið egesa to me” (ll. 85b-86b) (I am able to heal each one of those people who is in fear of me). As the Dreamer reaches towards the end of his vision and his

¹²⁰ Christina Heckman has argued, “While we often say that Anselm of Canterbury founded a tradition of medieval affective spirituality, no tradition arises in a vacuum.” Anselm himself produced his texts within a larger context of Latin and vernacular meditative traditions that have their roots in patristic traditions, Anglo-Latin works of early medieval monastic writers, and vernacular religious poetry. Christina Heckman, “*Imitatio* in Early Medieval Spirituality: *The Dream of the Rood*, Anselm, and Militant Christology,” *Essays in Medieval Studies*, Vol. 22 (2005), 141. As Elaine Treharne suggests, affective meditation is “dependent on sustained meditative focus in order to attain a spiritual union with God.” See further: Elaine Treharne, “Love and Longing,” in *Medieval Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 6. Scholars like John Fleming and Cynthia Hahn have also argued that the veneration of the Cross in the early Middle Ages is linked with the more established ‘affective turn’ that we see in the late Middle Ages. They furthermore both highlight how sight and perception is essential for the type of affective devotion that we find in the *Dream*. See further: John Fleming, “‘The Dream of the Rood’ and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism,” 70; Christina Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400-circa 1204* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 89. On affective devotion in the Middle Ages, see further: Claire Sponsler, *Drama and Resistance: Bodies: Goods, and Theatricality in Late Medieval England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Susan Avray, *Private Passions: The Contemplation of Suffering in Medieval Affective Devotions*, unpublished PhD Dissertation (Rutgers, 2008); Julia Bolton Holloway, “‘The Dream of the Rood’ and Liturgical Drama,” *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1984), 19-37.

eventual return to the world, the poem increasingly focuses on fear as a productive devotional response, reaching its climax when the Rood describes Judgment Day: “Ne mæg þær ænig unforht wesan/ for þam worde þe se Wealdend cwyð./ Frineð he for þære mænige hwær se man sie/ se ðe for Dryhtnes naman deaðes wolde/ biteres onbyrigan swa he ær on ðam beame dyde” (ll. 110-114) (Nor might any be unafraid there because of the words which the Ruler said. He will ask in front of many where the person is who for the Lord’s name would taste bitter death just as he did before on that tree). The Rood thus implies that both the Dreamer and medieval readers will be judged based on their eagerness to visualize and participate in Christ’s suffering.

It is worth highlighting again that the poem’s explicit call to re-live the Crucifixion bridges early versions of liturgical ceremonies such as the *Adoratio Crucis*, while also reaching forward to affective texts like *Pe Wohunge of oure Laured*. Within the liturgy, the *Adoratio Crucis* encourages the audience to observe the Cross, visualize Christ’s pain on the Cross, and link what they observe with their own lives.¹²¹ As Peggy Samuels argues, the ceremony pushes the audience to “observe Christ transfixed to the cross and pray to be liberated from the transfixion or piercing by devils. They see the wounds of Christ and they pray for a remedy for their own wounds.”¹²² Similarly, as we saw in the beginning of this chapter, texts like the *Wohunge* require readers to take Christ’s pain into themselves—the speaker thus cries out to Christ at the poem’s climax, “Mi bodi henge wið þi bodi neiled o rode/ sperred querfaste wið inne fowr wahes/ and henge i wile wið þe/ and neauer mare of mi rode cume til þat i deie” (ll. 398-401) (My body will hang with your body, nailed on the cross, speared securely within four walls. And I will hang with you and nevermore come from my cross until I die). Both of these examples, like the *Dream* poem, use the image of the Cross to incite the speaker/observer to

¹²¹ Peggy Samuels, “The Audience Written into the Script of *The Dream of the Rood*,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 49 (1968): 311-320, at 312-313.

¹²² Peggy Samuels, “The Audience Written into the Script of *The Dream of the Rood*,” 313.

perform mimesis, to internalize the narrative, and use it as a foundation for performing devotion.

By linking these disparate narratives together, we are able to see how the function of reading as a mimetic practice remains a powerful tool across genre and period. In the *Dream*, as in the *Adoratio* and the *Wohunge*, the medieval reader gains devotional benefits by sharing in the dream vision and by re-enacting the poem's imagery within their own minds. Irving sums up this sentiment in his work on dramatic interaction and the *Dream* poem, stating, "the knowledge we gain must be experiential: like Dreamer and Rood, we come to know through sharing in suffering and suspense."¹²³ In the grand scheme of the poem, just as the Rood "lifes weg/ rihtne gerymde reordberendum" (ll. 88b-89b) (opened the way of life to the speech-bearers), so too does the Dreamer open up a path to the Rood for readers through his narration and subsequent dissemination of the dream.¹²⁴ In other words, despite the individual nature of the Dreamer's dream vision, readers of the poem are made into a cohesive audience through the adoration of the Cross. By creating a text which all readers may experience and imitate each time the poem is read or heard, the Dreamer has seemingly fulfilled the Rood's request to "gesyhðe secge mannum" (l. 96) (tell this vision to men) with the creation of the poem itself.

¹²³ Edward Irving, "Crucifixion Witnessed, or Dramatic Interaction in *The Dream of the Rood*," 262.

¹²⁴ Orchard, *The Dream of the Rood*—Cross References," 231.

Conclusion

Over the last four chapters, this project has sought to create connections between disparate periods and fields, from Late Antiquity to the late Middle Ages, and from early liturgy to early modern closet drama. As Anglo-Saxon studies moves forward, I believe that we need to draw more on these connections and on diverse scholarship to expand our understanding of how categories like performance, interiority, and cognition align. I would therefore like to end this dissertation by going back to the beginning, to the mind-stage that Margaret Cavendish so aptly described in her *Sociable Letters*. When explaining her relationship to the theater, she states: “though I do not go Personally to Masks, Balls, and Playes, yet my Thoughts entertain my Mind with such Pleasures, for some of my Thoughts make Playes, and others Act those Playes on the Stage of Imagination, where my Mind sits as Spectator.”¹ The “Stage of Imagination” on which her thoughts perform has three important effects: first, it allows Cavendish to experience the same pleasure that she would feel while watching a live performance; second, it allows her to replay scenes whenever and wherever she wishes, and third, it pushes her to know her “self” through repeated inner-reflection.² Cavendish finds pleasure in shaping her thoughts into play form, and is “pleased to have them [her thoughts] Repeat their Poems, and other Works which they make” at every available opportunity. All individuals must do to access and perform on this

¹ Margaret Cavendish, “Letter 29,” 40.

² She makes it clear in “Letter 29” that living a solitary life of reflection, in which enacting these plays on the mind-stage was a significant part, allows her to better know the self: “and thus I take as much Pleasure within my self, if not more, as the Lady *S. P.* doth without her self; indeed none enjoys truly himself, but those that live to themselves, as I do, and it is better to be a Self-lover in a Retired Life, than a Self-seeker in a Wandring Humour, like a Vagabond, for they go from Place to Place, from one Company to another, and never are at rest in their Minds nor Bodies.” Margaret Cavendish, “Letter 29,” 41.

inner-stage is thus to turn inward, recall a specific scene and bring it forward, and let their imaginations take hold.

It is the private, iterative nature of this process that provides such a fitting comparison with medieval devotion. Just as Cavendish's inner-performances allow her to feel delight, pleasure, and awe as she sits in solitary thought, so too do the medieval texts in this dissertation push their readers to repeatedly perform intense emotion as they meditate in private.³ Monastic rule from the Anglo-Saxon period urges devotees to engage in this type of unceasing reflection—as the *Regularis Concordia* mandates, part of daily devotion is fulfilled by offering communal prayers at regular fixed hours and part by private meditation and reading that occurs away from the community.⁴ My case studies, as I have hoped to show, could act as scripts for this private form of devotion by prompting the internal performance of specific devotional action, whether imagining an inner-dialogue between two facets of the mind or visualizing kneeling at the foot of the blood-soaked Rood.⁵ Unlike the fixed prayers of the liturgy, performing private prayer within the mind could occur whenever an individual read a text or even recalled its content. The cyclical process of reading, internalizing, and visualizing dramatic spectacle ultimately makes medieval

³ As I mentioned at the end of Chapter Four, affective devotion gained traction from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries—scholars have traditionally studied this period as the beginning of a concern with interiority and the self in the Middle Ages. But as I have sought to illustrate in this dissertation, the construction of an interior self projects back into the Anglo-Saxon period as well.

⁴ See the following select list of Scripture for the topic of “unceasing prayer”: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Matthew 6:6; Luke 18:1-8; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2. For more on the daily devotional practice of monks, see: Thomas Symons, *Regularis Concordia Anglica nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque* (London: 1953); John Howe, *Before the Gregorian Reform: The Latin Church at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 154.

⁵ This idea of “scripting” internal prayer need not be relegated to the monastic community. As we saw in texts like *Vercelli IV*, which is thought to have a private readership that may be lay or monastic, both groups of devotees could use these templates to aid in memory retention and creative visualization. I speak of devotees in the monastic setting because we have the *Regularis Concordia* that explicitly details their daily schedules.

readers devotionally productive and leads them to a better understanding of the *ingebance* (inner-consciousness).

Based on the wide range of OE texts that encourage this type of performative meditation, it is clear that early medieval authors were deeply invested in developing a sense of self-awareness and a sense of interiority. Perhaps the best example of this interest is the sheer popularity of the *Pyschomachia*, which encourages readers to build a soul-fortress near the end of the poem.⁶ Even after the Vices are defeated, readers are told that the threat of Discordia still lurks unseen, waiting to restart the battle for the soul at the opportune moment. As the Virtues build a temple to be guarded and ruled by Wisdom, Concordia accordingly warns her followers to “ergo cavete” (l. 758) (therefore be on your guard) even though the battle is completed and peace should finally reign. The poet then turns to his readers and explains that Christ, “nos corporei latebrosa pericula operi luctantisque animae voluisti agnoscere casus” (ll. 891-2) (wished for us to learn the dangers that lurk unseen within the body, and the vicissitudes of our soul’s struggle) because “fervent bella horrida, fervent ossibus inclusa, fremit et discordibus armis non simplex natura hominis” (ll. 902-903) (savage war rages hotly, rages within our bones, and man’s two-sided nature is in an uproar of rebellion). For Prudentius, part of learning about the self means turning inward and realizing that Vices reside deep within the soul, waiting to entrap each devotee. The *Pyschomachia*’s work as a didactic devotional poem is thus to outline for readers how the battle against the Vices should ideally play out. It is up to the readers to first work their way through the script, turn inward, and then productively imagine the battle occurring within themselves. It is also their responsibility to remember the permeability of the self as a construct—even though medieval readers can build a fortress around the soul to protect

⁶ The soul as fortress is a widely attested image across Old and Middle English literature. See note 38 (p. 116) in Chapter Two.

against sin, there is always the possibility that Vice can slip through the cracks, re-entering the mind and beginning the battle anew. Readers must therefore practice constant vigilance, as Concordia commands, by repeatedly reenacting the soul-battle within the mind, and scrutinizing the state of their own inner-psyches.⁷

By taking what they learn from texts like the *Psychomachia* and using that knowledge to develop performative habits of mind, medieval readers are engaging in what Foucault calls “technologies of the self.” In his work to outline the development of the self from Classical Antiquity to early Christianity, he defines “technologies of the self” as a series of “truth games,” or techniques that humans use to know themselves that “permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.”⁸ Unlike Greco-Roman philosophers, who sought to intimately know the self as an ethical practice in and of itself, Foucault argues that early Christian teaching required “a certain renunciation of the self and of reality because most of the time your self is a part of that reality you have to renounce in order to get access to another level of reality.”⁹ For Foucault, this renunciation occurred through the habitual engagement in practices such as asceticism, penance, and confession, which force the

⁷ Because devotional exercises like the *Psychomachia* prompted this reflexive self-examination, much of the individual devotee’s time was spent ingesting and digesting texts, thereby creating a text-hoard of devotional material from which they could draw in their quest to attain salvation.

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 18. Cf. Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame (2011), 212.

⁹ Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, 35.

individual to expose him/herself to the community in order to suffer “an affect of change, of rupture with self, past, and the world” and achieve personal transformation.¹⁰

Hilary Fox has convincingly shown in her analysis of the OE *Boethius*, however, that Foucault does not take into consideration the intermixing of Greco-Roman self-care (as mediated through Augustine and the Boethius) and early medieval soteriology.¹¹ As she goes on to observe, if the goal of the OE *Boethius* is to reject the self, “its insistence on return to earth and embodied life, and its constantly iterative programs of self-assessment and self-governance, acknowledges that one’s ability to break with a former self is limited.”¹² In all four of the chapters above, we see this exact fluctuation between internal self-examination and the desire to return to embodied life—the Dreamer, for example, eventually rejoins the waking world to spread his vision to mankind, while Prudentius and the *Vercelli IV* homilist exhort their readers to take what they have learned, return to the world, and put their knowledge into practice. In the OE *Soliloquies*, moreover, Alfred devotes the entire third book to proving that individuals will retain their personal knowledge and memories in the afterlife, all because he is concerned about losing the “self” he meticulously curated on earth. In each of these examples, medieval readers are encouraged to follow the text as a model and retreat into the inner-self; and yet, they are likewise urged to find balance between this new-found interiority and their lives within the

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, 43.

¹¹ Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” 212.

¹² Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” 212.

world.¹³ As Fox suggests, devotional narratives, “particularly those meant to provide examples of virtue and correct behavior,” provide a link between these two poles for medieval readers.¹⁴

I thus extend Fox’s argument from the *Boethius* to suggest that the mediation between inner and outer life occurs across Old English poetry and prose, in which readers must delve into the *ingebance* only to bring their acquired self-knowledge back into the present. We see this balance explicitly in the ekphrastic descriptions and figurative language with which Anglo-Saxon authors adorn their texts. In *Vercelli IV*, for example, the homilist pairs gruesome physical descriptions of the decomposing body alongside his exhortation to “utan geþencan hu...sprycð sio sawl” (ll. 153-4) (let us think how...this soul speaks) and to remember that worldly actions have very real consequences. In the OE *Soliloquies*, meanwhile, Alfred adds a series of extended metaphors on sailing, building houses, and navigating the relationship between a king and his subjects; these additions make the Latin text more readable for the Anglo-Saxon audience, as Nicole Discenza has argued, but they also crucially root the devotional text within the corporeal world by allowing readers to understand wisdom through commonplace analogies.¹⁵

For medieval authors and readers, maintaining a symbiotic balance between private and communal devotion is thus essential for a productive Christian life—as we see in texts like the *Regularis Conordia*, which divides the day into communal prayer and private reflection, and in texts like the *Dream*, which narrates a private vision and its eventual dissemination in the world, readers are urged to turn away from the public sphere even as they are prompted to reconnect

¹³ In Michael Matto’s work on the *Seafarer*, he similarly argues that moments interiority within the *Seafarer* highlight the self’s permeability, or the connection between the interior self and the outside world in which he or she lives. See further: Michael Matto, “True Confessions: *The Seafarer* and Technologies of the Self,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 103 (2004): 156-179.

¹⁴ Hilary Fox, “Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations,” 212.

¹⁵ Nicole Guenther Discenza, *King’s English: The Strategies of Translation in the Old English Boethius* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 1-12.

with it. In the same way that interior reflection is connected to practical action within the world, so too is the individual devotee deeply connected with his or her devotional community. Readers who practice private devotion away from the community allow texts to direct their thoughts toward salvation, just as a preacher might direct his audience's thoughts during Mass. Perhaps most importantly, it is possible that this form of reading would also prompt readers to engage in more creative devotional responses; unlike the static replies that individuals might give during the liturgy, acting out scenes on the mind-stage would allow readers the freedom to both visualize and respond to devotional narratives in their own way. As this dissertation demonstrates, this dynamic push and pull between interior and exterior life is ultimately key to understanding the scope of Anglo-Saxon devotion. By recognizing that some OE texts require an interactive transaction between text and reader, we can ultimately call into question the notion of a fully orthodox Anglo-Saxon corpus, and also admit the theatrical power of didactic early medieval texts to facilitate interiority and reinforce moral care.

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